While the title of this book is bland, it reflects accurately the focus of this 374-page volume of 24 articles by 28 contributors, representing 13 Caribbean countries.

The contributors include the general editor, Chandana Jayardena, who is are research fellow and senior lecturer at the University of the West Indies, Mona, as well as academia director of the master’s programme in tourism and hospitality management.

In the preface, he explains that the main objective of this book is to `record, investigate and analyze significant initiations, practices, trends and challenges in education and training in the tourism and hospitality sector within the Caribbean region` (p.xx1). But the book achieves its stated purpose and in doing so becomes a landmark pioneering venture, much needed by all who would seek to understand better tourism and hospitality in the Caribbean - students, lecturers, consultants, managers and supervisors.

The central theme is treated in three segments of eight chapters each: (1) Institutional and Special Project Case Studies (2) Country Case Studies (3) and, Present and Future Challenges. Essentially then, the approach is research-based, emphasising project and country case studies. This gives the work a pragmatic orientation, and so makes it an invaluable reference.

Throughout the book, the significance, importance and relevance of the tourism product are underscored. Much of what is said will be new to many Caribbean leaders in politics and in academia for there can be no doubt that the vast potential of this industry has never been taken seriously by most Caribbean countries, if any.

But that is changing, for a paradigm shift has occurred in the business to shatter indifference or lethargy from any Caribbean country. Ainsley O’Reilly, senior lecturer and founder director of the Bahamas based Centre for Hotel and Tourism Management of the
UWI, makes the point about the way Caribbean governments need to wake up and begin prioritizing tourism.

He says some Caribbean governments have until recently, `considered it (Tourism) ephemeral and not worthy of serious thought` (p. 341). He mentions that it was as late as 1992 that for the first time the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) Heads of Government Conference discussed seriously tourism issues (p. 341).

Nevertheless, he argues that neglect occurs within the context of the Caribbean being `often referred to as the most tourism dependent region in the world`. He states further: `Tourism earnings account for approximately 25% of the region’s gross domestic product, and that the Caribbean, `as a single destination, usually ranks sixth in the world in tourist receipts.

Concerned about the need then, for making tourism and hospitality studies a priority, this book has been published `on behalf of the Council of Caribbean Hospitality Schools (CHOCHS) and the Hotel and Catering International Management Association (HCIMA) - Jamaica group. O’Reilly tells us that in the Caribbean today there are approximately twenty-four schools and programmes within schools that have hospitality and tourism studies as their major concentration. Regrettably, he notes that most of these schools have not been developed properly, have poor facilities and are generally under-funded.`

Kenneth Hall, Principal of the University of the West Indies, Mona, teams with the general editor and in their essay make it clear that the UWI is aware of the way the internet is reshaping education in revolutionary ways, and so, among other factors is pressing the case for radical strategy in better promoting the tourism product.

The time has come to alter radically the philosophical foundations of tertiary education in the region. Current indicators suggest that the limited number of programmes and students in the UWI system is inadequate for the region's future development.

Carolyn Hayle, a Senior Project Officer at the UWI, who lectures on sustainable tourism and marketing, emphasises the need to link and integrate tourism rather than isolate and alienate it, for tourism does not and cannot stand `by itself.`

She makes reference to a 1994 study in Jamaica, in which it was reported that 11% of visitors said they would not return to the island because of environmental problems, some of them describing the socio-economic conditions as `depressing`.

In making her forceful conclusion, which ends the book, she says: `The Caribbean, at this juncture, faces stiff competition from the rest of the world. The best marketing strategy is in the development of the human resource potential in the region. An integrated approach to planning, steeped in the principles of sustainable development, will lead to a better understanding of ourselves as people, and to the development of a legacy befitting those who may follow` (p.368)
On the technical side, this work would have been enhanced with a map of the Caribbean, and perhaps photos of the essayists. Nevertheless, it is a good work, and should prove of much value to anyone interested in an overall view of Tourism and Hospitality and Education in the Caribbean.

The informational value of the work is undeniable but underlying it is a call for radical action that would jerk sensitive Caribbean leaders from lethargy to dynamism. Refreshingly, the UWI is aware and prepared to demonstrate the key role in making the education revolution possible.

This book is a call to action for prioritizing tourism and in process provides a good overall view of the state of the subject the title announces. - Publisher: University of the West Indies Press.