

STAKEHOLDERS' SATISFACTION TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT IN PUSHKAR REGION OF RAJASTHAN

Shiv Kumar GUPTA¹, Sunil TIWARI¹, Mihai VODA² 

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ABSTRACT:

This article aims at assessing satisfaction of different stakeholders (Hoteliers, Restaurants, Handicrafts Shopkeepers and Transporters) in Pushkar. Their satisfaction level is assessed with core indicators of sustainability. It is a quantitative as well as qualitative assessment based on survey research design in study area. Data was collected through 250 self-administered questionnaires which includes (40 Travel agents, 50 hoteliers, 50 Restaurants and Souvenir, 30 Foreign exchange agents and 30 transporters) and were analyzed by quantitative methods. Descriptive statistics (Frequencies, Percentages, Means, and Standard Deviations) and inferential statistics (t-test) was performed to assess and analyze stakeholders' satisfaction with reference to 11 core indicators of sustainability such as: Site protection, Stress, Use Intensity, Social Impact, Developing Control, Waste Management, Planning process, Critical ecosystems, Consumer satisfaction, Local Satisfaction, Tourism Contribution to Local Economy. The results of study suggest that stakeholders have different level of satisfaction with different core indicators but on core indicators like Developmental stress, Use intensity, Developing control, Waste Management and critical ecosystem, stakeholders have low level of satisfaction. In order to develop a destination in a responsible and sustainable manner, stakeholders must have very high level of satisfaction on each core indicator of sustainability.

Key-words: Stakeholders Satisfaction, Sustainable tourism, Responsible tourism, Core Indicators.

1. INTRODUCTION

Sustainable development is the center of focus since the Brutland report (WCED 1987), followed by the Earth summit in 1991 and United Nations World Tourism Organization set agenda for the 21st century for the sustainable growth and development of Tourism. Most important mile stone in the history of sustainable tourism development was year 2015 when seventeen Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations. Now Tourism is an important global socio-economic activity which has an impact on economy, ecology and environment, on societies and culture both positive and negative in many ways. Sustainable tourism is an attempt to develop tourism in such a way that has positive impact on the environment, society, economy, local culture, local people and whatever related to tourism directly or indirectly. Pushkar, bordered by *Nag Pahar* (Snake Mountain), known as *the rose garden* of Rajasthan state of India represent a famous tourist destination for pilgrimage It has a unique cultural heritage which is valorized at the international Pushkar Fair. Tourism and Hospitality industry is very much affected through the perception and satisfaction of the various stakeholders who are directly and indirectly involve in the entire process of tourism at any destination. Stakeholders' perceptions are always considered in relation to expectations and compare with their satisfaction to ensure growth and development of sustainable tourism (Hardy 2005; Alazaizeh et al. 2019).

Sustainability includes all essentials that constitute a complete tourism experience. According to the majority of contributors (Voda et al. 2019; Sharpley 2000; Butler 1991; Vellas and Becherel

¹HNBG University, Srinagar Garhwal, Uttarakhand, India, sk_gupta21@yahoo.com,
tiwari.sunil10@outlook.com

²Dimitrie Cantemir University, Targu Mures, Romania, mihai voda@cantemir.ro

1999; WCED 1987) ‘sustainable tourism development’ aims at economic, social and environmental tourism development that concerns to the continuous improvement of tourists’ experiences. The tourism industry has great potential to achieve sustainable development goals. The determination of sustainable tourism is to create a balance between environment protection, preserving cultural integrity, creating social justice and promoting economic benefits, meeting the needs of the local community in terms of improved living standards both in the short and long term in both developed and emerging nations (Swarbrooke and Horner 2004; Mitchell and Hall 2005).

Sustainable development has been discussed extensively in tourism sector as it can meet up needs of tourists, service providers, locals and whosoever being associated with this sector (Eagles et al. 2002). Thus, it has become important to develop a destination under core indicators of sustainability (Sebele 2010; Taylor 1995). Various studies have been conducted on different aspects of sustainability such as cultural, social and environmental impacts, perceived economy and perceived benefits (Choi and Murray 2010; Dyer et al. 2007; Ko and Stewart 2002; Nunkoo and Ramkissoon 2011; Oviedo-García et al. 2008; Yoon et al. 2001). Studies have also found that stakeholders’ satisfaction level play a significant role in view of sustainable tourism development at any destination (Gursoy et al. 2002; Gursoy and Kendall 2006; Gursoy and Rutherford 2004; Kaltenborn et al. 2008; Nicholas et al. 2009). A wide variety of factors, including social, cultural and economic considerations at each level of the tourism system, affects the implementation of sustainable tourism practices. A few studies on sustainable tourism and ecotourism related to the Garhwal region have been undertaken by Gupta and Bhatt, (2009, 2012); Gupta and Rout (2016, 2017 and 2019). However, a few studies have been conducted on stakeholders’ satisfaction towards sustainable tourism development at Pushkar region of Rajasthan India. In order to fill this research gap, this study aims to measure the satisfaction of different stakeholders towards tourism development under core indicators of sustainability.

2. STUDY AREA

Pushkar is located northwesterly from Ajmer in central east part of Indian state of Rajasthan on western side of Aravalli Mountains. Bordered by *Nag Pahar* range, it lies between North latitude $26^{\circ}29'23''$ and East longitude $74^{\circ}33'3''$ and sprawl around 10 kilometers (see **Fig. 1**).

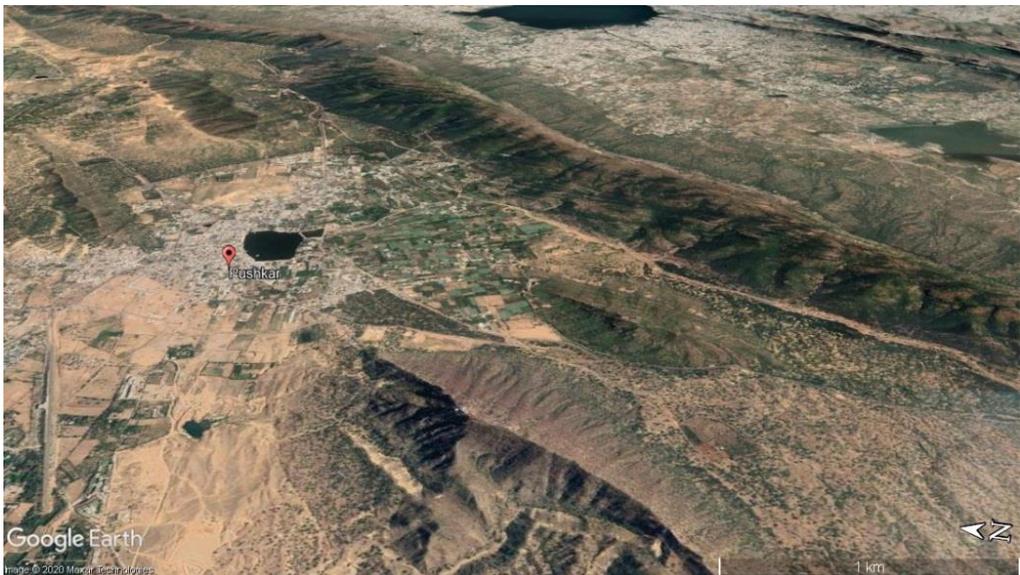


Fig. 1. Location of Pushkar study area of Rajasthan, India.

It is an important Centre of pilgrimage for Hindus. The place has a magnetic appeal with 400 temples that are blue white and a number of Bathing Ghats. The town resounds with chanting of prayers and religious songs, along with drums and gongs. Pushkar is a lively tourist attraction where tourists are flocking from the world over. There is a dash of commercialism but the town retains its mystique and traditional charm. Pushkar is the well-known tourist destination across the India and Globe as it hosting international fair every year. In the year 2019 out of total 1192345 number of tourists, 423234 tourists visited during Pushkar fair only.

3. DATA AND METHODS

In view of assessment and evaluation various stakeholders' satisfaction towards core indicators of sustainability, following research objectives and hypotheses are formulated;

1. To assess and evaluate satisfaction level of stakeholders' towards tourism development in the Pushkar region under all the core indicators of sustainability.
2. To measure the satisfaction level of stakeholders' towards tourism development in the Pushkar region under each core indicator of sustainability.

H01: There is no significant difference between stakeholders' satisfaction and tourism development in the study area under all core indicators of sustainability.

H2: There is significant difference between stakeholders' satisfaction and tourism development in the study area under each core indicator of sustainability.

On the basis of review of literature pertaining to sustainable tourism development, a survey questionnaire was developed on Stakeholders' satisfaction measurement scale (SSMS). Eleven core indicators of sustainability i.e. Site protection, Stress, Use Intensity, Social Impact, Developing Control, Waste Management, Planning process, Critical ecosystems, Consumer satisfaction, Local Satisfaction and Tourism Contribution to Local Economy were included in this questionnaire.

Data was collected from 250 stakeholders which includes (40 Travel agents, 50 hoteliers, 50 Restaurants, 50 Handicrafts and Souvenir, 30 Foreign exchange agents and 30 transporters) self-administered questionnaires by using stratified random sampling technique and five point Likert Scale. Reliability, normality and validity of the data and tool was also checked by examining the Cronbach's alpha, percentage of missing data, mean, standard deviation, item discrimination, skewness and kurtosis. Furthermore, collected data has been analyzed with the help of descriptive statistics; Central tendency (Mean), Z-score, frequency distribution, percentile, Norms, Standard deviation (SD), whereas in Inferential statistics; One sample t-test was computed.

4. RESULTS

To assess and evaluate satisfaction level of stakeholders towards tourism development in the Pushkar region under all the core indicators of sustainability, one sample t- test and Gap analysis was conducted to know the mean difference between stakeholders' overall satisfaction and tourism development in the study area and results are computed in **Table 1**.

Table 1 shows that the sample mean of stakeholders' satisfaction towards tourism development is 34.42, value of hypothesize mean is 55 (test value) and mean difference between them is 20.576, Values of S.D. and t-ratio are 2.144 and 151.711 respectively. Whether mean difference is significant or not with the help of degree of freedom (248) is further confirmed by the p value. Here p value is 0.000 ($p=0.000<0.01$) which is less than 0.01. There is a significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of stakeholder satisfaction towards tourism development, therefore null hypothesis **H01** is **rejected** at 0.01 level of significance and there is significant difference between stakeholders' satisfaction and tourism development in the study area under all core indicators of sustainability.

Further, with the help of graphical presentation it is understood that sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is lying below the level of satisfaction on tourism development under core indicators of sustainability as per the **Table 2**.

Table 1.
Results of One Sample t – test for Satisfaction of all Stakeholders on Tourism Development under Core Indicators of Sustainability

Variable	N	Hypothesized Mean	Mean	S.D	Mean Difference	t-ratio	p-value
Total Stakeholders' Overall Satisfaction	250	55	34.42	2.144	20.576	151.711	0.000**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Source: Primary Data

Table 2.
Level of Satisfaction on Tourism Development under Core Indicators of Sustainability

Mean Scores	Level of Satisfaction on tourism development under core indicators of sustainability
1-11	Very Low
11-22	Low
22-33	Average
33-44	High
44-55	Very High

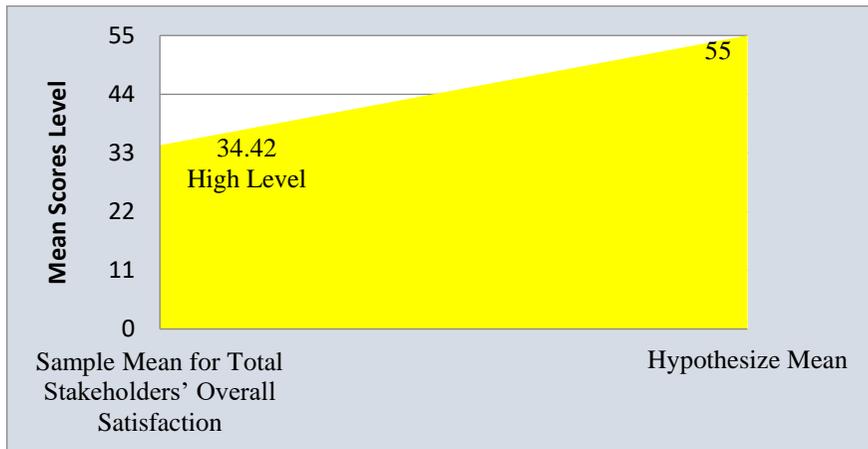


Fig. 2. Area graph of level of total stakeholders' satisfaction on Tourism Development under Core Indicators of Sustainability.

Figure 2 shows that Total stakeholders collectively have high level of satisfaction towards Tourism development under all core indicators of sustainability as sample mean (34.42) falls under high level of satisfaction category (33-44). To measure the satisfaction level of stakeholders towards tourism development in the Pushkar region under each core indicator of sustainability, One sample t- test and Gap analysis was conducted to know the mean difference between stakeholders' satisfaction towards each core indicator of sustainability such as Site protection, Stress, Use Intensity, Social Impact, Developing Control, Waste Management, Planning process, Critical ecosystems, Consumer satisfaction, Local Satisfaction and Tourism Contribution to Local Economy. It is observed that Stakeholders have different level of satisfaction with different core indicators and results are computed in **Table 3**.

Table 3.

Results of One sample t – test for Satisfaction of all stakeholders on Tourism Development under each Core Indicator of Sustainability

Core Indicators of Sustainability	N	Hypothesize Mean	Mean	S.D	Mean Difference	t-ratio	p-value
CI-1	250	5	4.48	0.582	0.520	14.122	0.000**
CI -2	250	5	1.67	0.572	3.332	92.118	0.000**
CI-3	250	5	1.58	0.494	3.416	109.361	0.000**
CI-4	250	5	4.02	0.909	0.976	16.972	0.000**
CI-5	250	5	1.62	0.617	3.380	86.567	0.000**
CI-6	250	5	1.80	0.766	3.200	66.076	0.000**
CI-7	250	5	4.20	0.739	0.800	17.116	0.000**
CI-8	250	5	1.76	0.621	3.244	82.557	0.000**
CI-9	250	5	4.39	0.626	0.608	15.356	0.000**
CI-10	250	5	4.43	0.592	0.568	15.164	0.000**
CI-11	250	5	4.48	0.589	0.524	14.069	0.000**

** Significant at 0.01 level

Source: Primary Data

For First Core indicator of Sustainability (CI-1 **Site protection**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 4.48 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.520 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.582, 14.122 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 indicates significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards first Core indicator of sustainability (CI-1 **Site protection**).

For second Core indicator of Sustainability (CI-2 **Stress**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders satisfaction is 1.67 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 3.332 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.572, 92.118 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 2nd Core indicator of sustainability (CI-2 **Stress**).

For third Core indicator of Sustainability (CI-3 **Use Intensity**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders satisfaction is 1.58 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 3.416 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.494, 109.361 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 specifies significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 3rd Core indicator of sustainability (CI-3 **Use Intensity**).

For fourth Core indicator of Sustainability (CI-4 **Social Impact**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders satisfaction is 4.02 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.976 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.909, 16.972 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 indicates significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 4th Core indicator of sustainability (CI-4 **Social Impact**).

For fifth Core indicator of sustainability (CI-5 **Developing Control**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 1.62 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 3.380 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.617, 86.567 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 5th Core indicator of sustainability (CI-5 **Developing Control**).

For sixth Core indicator of sustainability (CI-6 **Waste Management**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 1.80 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and

mean difference of 3.200 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.766, 66.076 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 indicates significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 6th Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-6 Waste Management**).

For seventh Core indicator of tourism development (**CI-7 Planning process**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders satisfaction is 4.20 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.800 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.739, 17.116 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 7th Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-7 Planning process**).

For eighth Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-8 Critical ecosystems**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 1.76 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 3.244 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.621, 82.557 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows a significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 8th Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-8 Critical ecosystems**).

For ninth Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-9 Consumer satisfaction**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 4.39 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.608 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.626, 15.356 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows a significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 9th Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-9 Consumer satisfaction**).

For tenth Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-10 Local Satisfaction**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 4.43 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.568 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.592, 15.164 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows a significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 10th core indicator of sustainability (**CI-10 Local Satisfaction**).

For eleventh Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-11 Tourism Contribution to Local Economy**) **Table 3** shows the sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is 4.48 and value of hypothesize mean is 5 (test value) and mean difference of 0.524 between them and values of S.D., t-ratio, and p value are 0.589, 14.069 and 0.000 respectively. Hence, p value 0.000 ($p=0.000 < 0.01$) which is less than 0.01 shows a significant mean difference between sample and hypothesize mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction towards 11th Core indicator of sustainability (**CI-11 Tourism Contribution to Local Economy**).

5. DISCUSSION

Based on the above findings it is concluded that hypothesis **H2** "There is significant difference between stakeholders' satisfaction and tourism development in the study area under each core indicator of sustainability has been **Accepted** and its corresponding objective "To measure the satisfaction level of stakeholders' towards tourism development in the Pushkar region under each core indicator of sustainability was **achieved**. Further, with the help of graphical presentation it is understood that sample mean of total stakeholders' satisfaction is lying below the level of satisfaction on tourism development under each core indicator of sustainability as per **Table 4**.

Table 4.

Mean score and Level of Satisfaction under each core indicator of sustainability.	
Mean scores	Level of Satisfaction
1 to 2	Low satisfaction
2 to 3	Moderate Satisfaction
3 to 4	High Satisfaction
4 to 5	Very high satisfaction

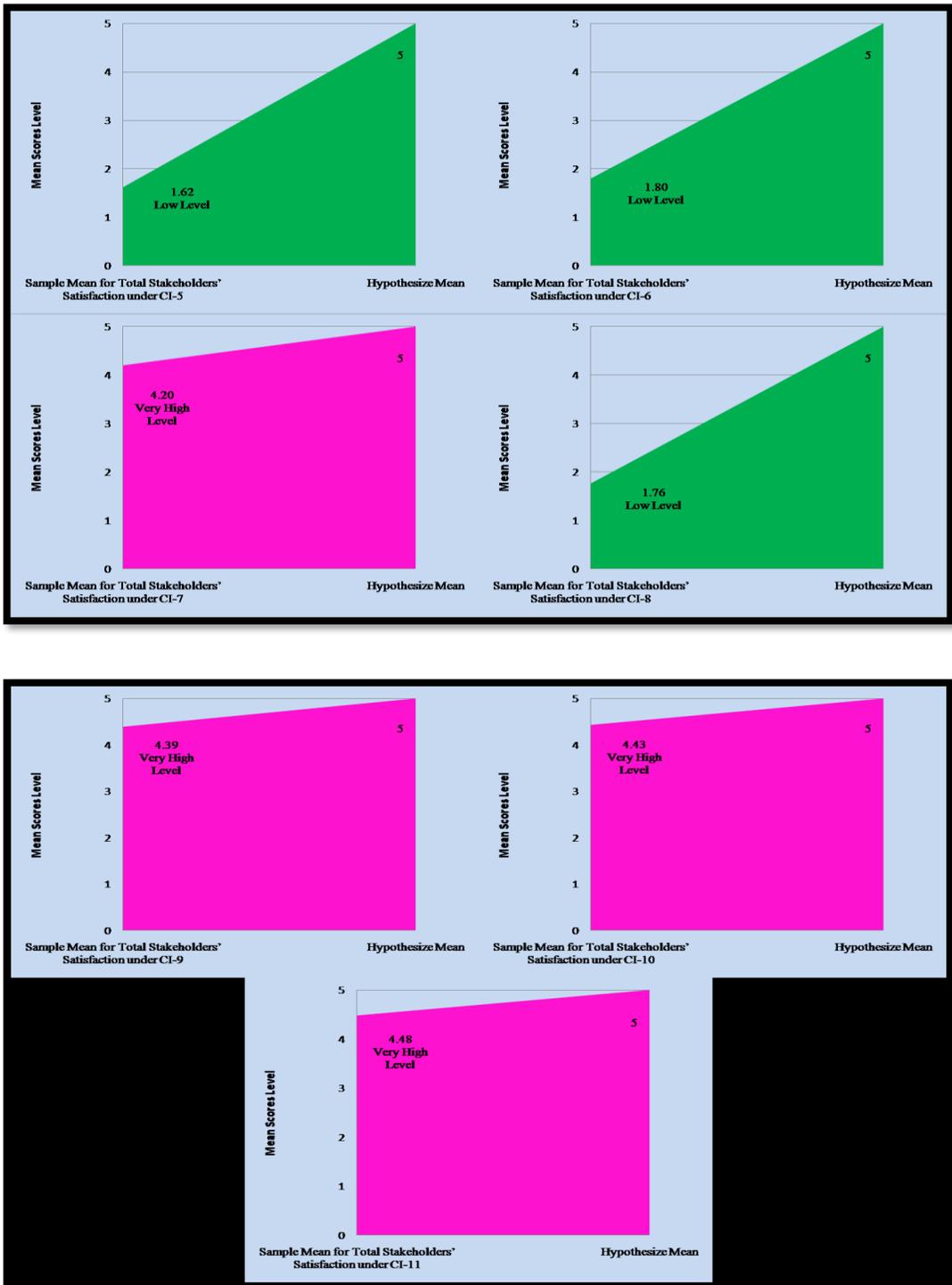


Fig. 3. Area graph of level of total stakeholders' satisfaction category on tourism development under each core indicator of sustainability.

From the **Figure 3** it is clear that stakeholders have very high satisfaction on core indicators.

As hypothesize mean is more than sample mean in reference to satisfaction of total stakeholders towards tourism development in the Pushkar under core indicators of sustainability and mean difference is significant, it is concluded that total stakeholders had high level satisfaction towards tourism development. Total stakeholders altogether have very high level of satisfaction with core indicator 1 (site protection), CI-4 (Social Impacts), CI-7 (Planning process), CI-9 (Consumer satisfaction), CI-10 (Local satisfaction), CI-11 (Tourism contribution to local economy) whereas they have low level of satisfaction with CI-2 (Stress), CI-3 (Use intensity), CI-5 (Developing control), CI-6 (Waste management) and CI-8 (critical ecosystem). But transporters have highest level of satisfaction followed by foreign exchange units, hoteliers, handicrafts units, travel agents and Restaurants units towards tourism development in the study area in term of sustainability.

Findings suggest that stakeholders have reasonably satisfied towards tourism development in the Pushkar under core indicators of sustainability. But it is recommended that tourism must be developed in more sustainable way under core indicators of sustainability and should ensure very high level of satisfaction of the stakeholders. Tourism planners and policy makers should focus on minimizing development Stress, maximize the uses of local products and services, ensure carrying capacity, Developmental control, proper waste management and healthy and peaceful ecosystem. On these core indicators stakeholders have low satisfaction. Further efforts should be taken to minimize the leakage and allow equitable distribution of tourism products and resources among the various stakeholders i.e. Foreign exchange agents, Hoteliers, handicrafts units, travel agents, foreign exchange units and Restaurants.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Pushkar is one of the most visited and well-known tourist destinations across India and World, where tourists keep flocking throughout the year. It also hosts International Cattle festival annually which itself attracts lakhs of tourists. Due to sudden outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic the entire tourism business of the region got affected severely. Pushkar has complete shut down since March 2020 and no tourist was allowed inside the city. All the hotels, home stays, restaurants, travel agent units, foreign exchange units, handicraft and souvenir shops, transport units, meditation Centre's and other travel related outlets was closed till July and further restricted movements of Domestic and local tourists were initiated. Lots of Local residents of Pushkar are dependent on the tourism sector. The COVID -19 pandemic has caused massive disruptions in economy, health, developmental activity, employment, sustainability and foreign exchange of the region. This pandemic has some positive impacts on Pushkar as destination such as natural cleaning of Holi Pushkar lake, control of air pollution, better waste management, speedy completion of the construction work of Ghats, sewage treatment, temples and roads, up gradation of environment and ecological balance. Big challenges lie before the local administration, tourism board, different stakeholders, visitors and local communities to organize International Pushkar Fair which is scheduled from 22nd to 30th November 2020. Amidst of COVID-19 pandemic Rajasthan and Pushkar Tourism Boards are working hard and ensuring utmost preparedness towards Sustainable Tourism Development and successfully organization of the Pushkar fair.

For sustainable development the negative impacts of tourism at the study area like demonstration effects, cultural conflicts, spiritual frauds, ethnocentrism, westernization and uncivil practices are to be reduced. Pushkar is well known tourist destination across the world because of its magnificent international camel festival but unfortunately over the years loss of its traditional character and undue commercialization is a great sense of concern .Hence the all organizers like Rajasthan Tourism Board; Ministry of Tourism, Government of India, Pushkar Tourism Board and Various other Local Authorities and Destination Management Organizations have play a pivotal role to maintain the traditional ethnicity of the fair. It is observed that the participation of cattle owners is gradually decreasing year by year. Simultaneously carrying capacity of the destination would also be maintained especially at the time of Pushkar fair.

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