

Land Value Zonation of Nainital Town, Kumaun Lesser Himalayas Uttarakhand

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ABSTRACT: The growth of urban centers actually depends upon the interplay of a variety of factors like economic, social, cultural and political acting over time. Although site may play a significant role in the origin of a center, actually the situations within the urban center ultimately determines the patterns of its growth over time. The facilities and availability of amenities are also important determinants of inhabitation and residential system. The majority of residentially and commercially developed areas in hilly town of Nainital are characterized with certain peculiarities like altitude, slope, accessibility and approach from the main lanes of town, proximity to the basic services and market. This apparently has led to fairly unplanned and scattered pocket like development of residences, markets, schools etc in the town. The present paper attempts to study the differentials in land values in and around the town and the major causes thereof.

KEYWORDS: Urban, Altitude, Slope, Accessibility, Land Value

I. INTRODUCTION

Undisputedly, man has been the most active agent modifying the face of the earth and at various stages of the History of landscape, the diverse activities of human beings result into the trans-formation of the natural landscape into the 'Cultural Landscape'. The features of cultural landscape i.e. the habitation lines of communications, agricultural tracks, urban areas etc. are in fact the physical expressions of man's presence. Since the present cultural landscape has evolved out of an interaction of space and time, it becomes essential to reconstruct the landscape of past in order to explain the landscape of today.

In the relation of Himalayan region falling within Kumaun, the location of Nainital is in the outermost ranges and its lies close to the main boundary thrust, a structural feature separating the lesser Himalaya and the Shiwalik ranges which are lower in altitude and have the outermost location facing the plains to the south. Nainital is situated at the altitude of 1938 m. The settlement has evolved around a magnificent lake, one of the biggest in Kumaun extends one an area of 14.32 sq km housing a population of around 45 thousand.

II. ORGIN AND GROWTH

Nainital was made known to the world in 1841 by P.Barron a British migrant from Shahjahanpur. Prior to that the whole area was covered with a dense forest, only frequented by the headman of surrounding villages who use to visit the place with their cattle during summers and the rainy season because of abundant pasturage of the valley. Mr. Trail who was the commissioner of Kumaun till 1835 has mentioned the existence of the place. It is well known that Trail was the first British to visit this place but there is no evidence in support of the fact the he ever visited Nainital. Trail had great respect for the traditions of the hill people and he did his best to conceal the existence of this beautiful valley. This fact was admitted by Barron in this book 'Wanderings' in the Himalays published in 1841 from Calcutta. This fact also confirmed by Barron in a newspaper 'Agra Akbar'.

III. AREA UNDER STUDY

The study area extends to the lake basin of Nainital town and its immediate surroundings. Lake Basin of Nainital is situated at an altitude of 1938m along the southern sections of Kumaon Lesser Himalaya, and lies at 29° 24' North Latitudes and 79° 28' East Longitudes in Uttarakhand State (Fig. 1). It has more or less a peripheral location with the Himalayan area lying to its north and has grown around a magnificent fresh water lake. The settlement of the town extends across the slopes over an area of 14.32 sq.km.

The lake and its immediate surroundings altogether have formed a famous tourist resort in this zone of Himalaya owing not only to the beautiful natural setting but also to its easily accessible location and transport connections from many big towns of Northern India including the capital of the country. (Fig 1)

Data base for the study

The data and information used in this study have been taken from various published and unpublished sources. Field data and quantitative and qualitative information have also been collected by focusing on the most affected areas.

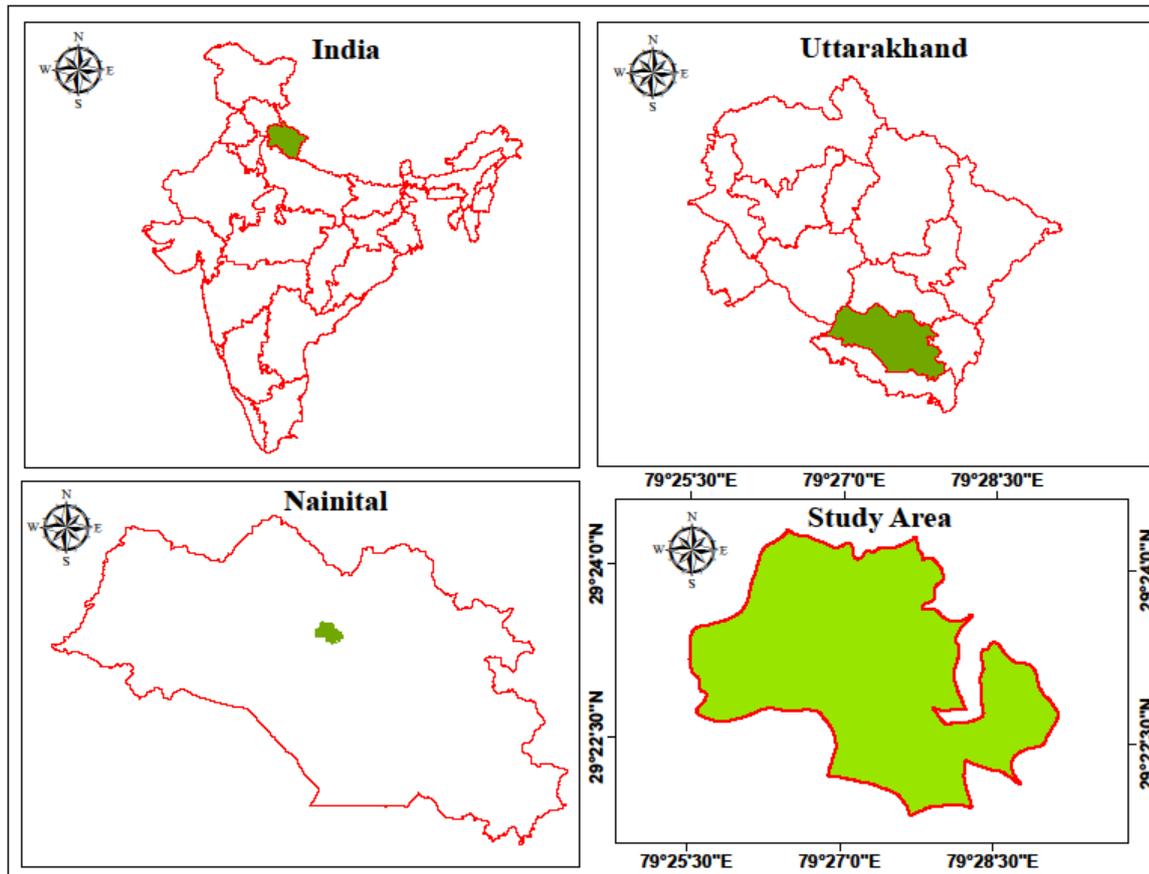


Fig 1: Location Map

Factors for Land Value Change

Land value refers to the market value or market price of a particular land piece or property. In other words, it means the worth of an interest in land and buildings assessed by the use of appropriate valuation methods. Various factors affect land value or property values; a few of such factors are mentioned below:

Location

The factor of location is very important in the determination of property values. Location is very unique as two adjacent sites may command different values depending on underlying factors of accessibility, physical terrain, size and configuration etc.

Accessibility

Accessibility evaluates the net economic cost of moving persons and goods between one place and another. It therefore, concerns both the distance travelled and the time taken to cover that distance. The availability of land for development can be enhanced by adequate transport network. With a given transport system, movement would be concentrated along particular areas, thus bringing about difference in site values as a result of accessibility advantages. Sites close to a main transport route will have a relative advantage. According to Millington (1994), proximity to good means of transportation/communication is a great advantage with virtually all property.

Infrastructure

These are physical structures and facilities that are developed or acquired by public agencies to enhance governmental functions and facilitate the achievement of common social and economic objectives. The availability of infrastructure attracts potential users to an environment. The availability of electricity to power machines, household facilities, roads for easy accessibility, communication gadgets to facilitate contacts, drainages and refuse disposal that enhance the

livability of the environment etc lead to rise in property values in such environment. Demand for land and buildings in such area will be high and since supply is relatively fixed, value will rise.

Complementarities

Complementarities of people and activities is said to be one of the advantages of locating in an urban area. If a particular site is surrounded by offices or houses or any other particular use, this would determine what will be the highest and best use of that site. Complementarities bring about the clustering of utilities created for the residents in the area. The high demand of such site increases property values.

Land use change and property values

Urban areas are continually subject to changes in use pattern and therefore, in value. As social and economic factors making for such changes exert their influence, land uses within an urban area will change with the resultant effect on property (land and buildings) values (Lean and Goodall, 1966). Basically the pattern of land use is a reflection of competition for sites between various uses operating through the forces of demand and supply. In an attempt to compete for space at the choice location (the city-centre) some uses are displaced for other potential uses willing to pay higher prices. In the same vein, owners of property at the choice location will be willing to convert the use of their property to those ones that offer the greatest advantages of rents and better management. In modern society, land resources usually earn a higher return or income/net gain when used for commercial or industrial purposes rather than for any other types of use.

Land Value Zoning in Nainital town

The value of land depends on the situation and location of the land which also calculates with the vigour city of use of land. The general meaning of land value is its financial value. It can be attested in the ways:

1. **Market Value:** The value which is the price of land parcel negotiated at the time of sale of the parcel.
2. **Assessed Value:** The value which is assessed by private and public assessor.

In any region, land value has been determined in connection with its proximity to growth /market centers, accessibility and availability of public utility services. Also the land value is a function of quality of residential locality and proximity.

These facts helps us in studying land value zonation of Nainital town owing to the great demand for space in the center of the town along the Mall Road, Tallital and Mallital business area, In the town, land value is always high due to its vertical expansion phenomena as well.

The main land zones of the town are:

- i. **Core Zone:-**The zone is most suitable for the location of settlement in this study area. This zone includes Mall Road, Tallital, Mallital and Central part of the town i.e the Flats area. The land value which was Rs 335 to Rs 400 per sqm in 1977 has increased from Rs 1200 to Rs 2400 per sqm in 1990 and now it has reached upto Rs 35000 persqm in 2010. The establishment of a number of education centers, tourist facilities, district headquarters and increasing economic activities are the main causes of the phenomenal rise in land values. The areas close to the center part of the town are Prashant hotel, Punjab hotel, Nainital club, Mallital Post Office and Himalaya hotel etc. In 1977 land value in the area was 200-270 Rs per sqm. The rise in the land value is due to the importance these areas as they are residential areas very close to the business centre. The land value has gone up to Rs 45000 per sqm.
- ii. **Moderate Zone:-** There is a fall in the land value as we go away from the town centre, but some areas have a high land value because of its proximity to known and important places like District Board office, Mevilla compound, Silverton hotel, Ferivilla, Forest lodge, Sukhatal, A.T.I and Sleepy hallow. The land value rose up from Rs 450-850 per sqm in 1991 which was 80-135 per sqm in 1977 to Rs 16500 in 2010.
- iii. **Crest Zone:-** This hazardous zone possesses very steep slopes, high altitude with dense forests. This zone is near the high mountain peaks and ranges.
 In 1990, the land value in these areas of Ayarpatta, Sher-ka-danda, Sherwood, Krishnapur, Sipahi Dhara etc. rose up to Rs 6000 per sqm in 2010 which was Rs 26-40 per sqm in 1977.

The table and figure shows how much the land cost has increased in the different parts of the town during last three decades. (Table 1, Figure 2) Today distance and height has no influence on the land values thus the land value increased every year due to which houses are being constructed at the height of 35⁰-40⁰ slope increasing the anthropogenic interference in this area . This has added to problems like soil erosion, debris flow, land slide and other related problems.

Table1. Showing Land Value Zoning in Nainital Town

S.No.	Zone	Location	Highest Land Value in Rs/SqM 1977	Highest Land Value in Rs/SqM 1997	Highest Land Value in Rs/SqM 2010
1	Core Zone1	1.The flats situated of the bank of the Mall road, Tallital, Mallital and Central part of the town	400	2400	45000
	Core Zone2	2. The flats just below Prashant hotel to the height of Punjab hotel and from rickshaw stand to the height of Himalaya hotel.	270	1200	27000
2	Moderate Zone 1	The flats situated at the height of Prashant hotel, District board, Mevilla compound, Silvertons hotel, Ferivilla, Greesvilla, Forest lodge,	100	850	17500
	Moderate Zone 2	Sukhatal, ATI Oak park, Sleepy hallow	75	650	15000
3	Crest Zone1	1. The flats situated at the height of Stonlay house, Bisht Bhawan, Ayarpatta, Sherwood college and above & Sher-ka-danda areas	135	300	7000
	Crest Zone 2	2. The flats situated at Krishnapur, Sipahi Dhara, Rais Hotel, Dungarpur House	50	200	5100

Source: District Magistrate Financial Office Nainital, Primary survey, Personal interaction with the residents

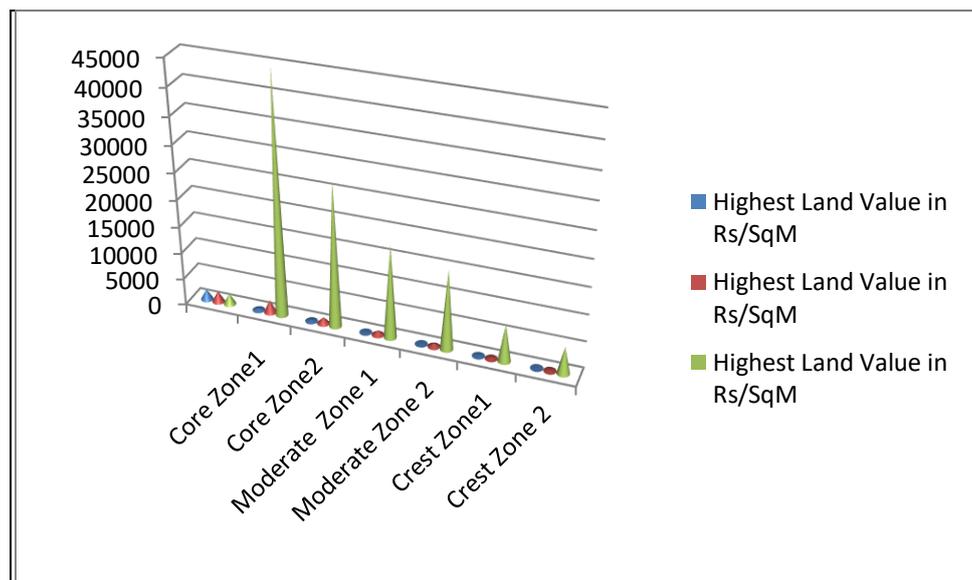


Figure 2: Zone wise price of land over years

Peoples's Perception

To scale the people's opinion about the land prices in the city and basic reasons for differentials in area wise properties, commercial and residential, 500 residents were interviewed through questionnaires. Most of the residents were of the opinion that location is most important factor to be considered for price fixing followed by accessibility, infrastructure and complementaries. (Figure 3)

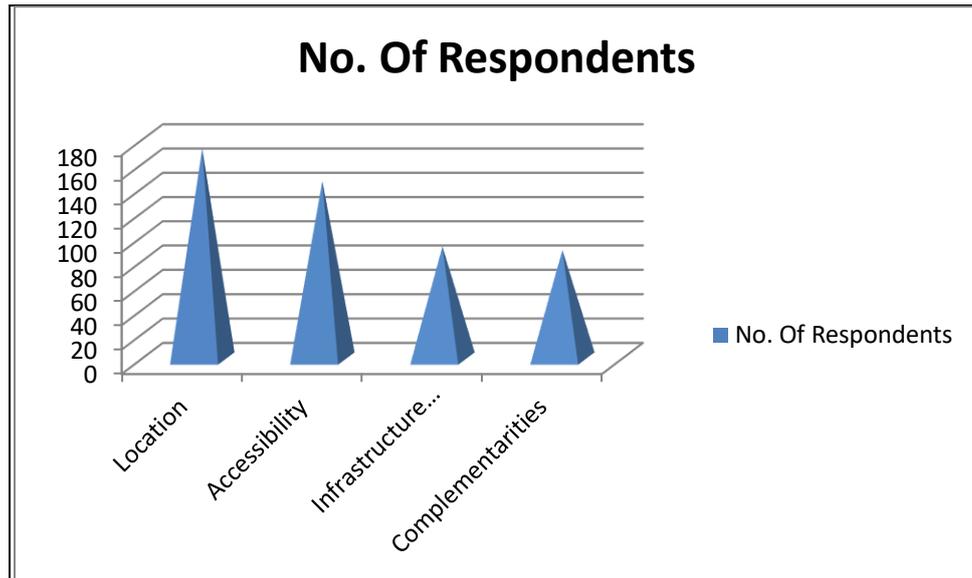


Figure 3: People’s perception towards factors affecting land value

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The present landscape features of Nainital town are in fact, the product of constantly changing process which are conditioned or modified by the changing social, economic, cultural and political circumstances of the times. The present study suggests that the land value for residential, commercial and institutional area in any urban centre is a direct function of its location in town and other factors like accessibility, infrastructure etc. Although the pace of concrete construction has damaged a lot, the city still attracts a lot of people from all around the world. That tourist population needs to be catered well therefore services are being developed continuously. Apart from this the administrative set up since British period and establishments like old colonial markets, schools, places of tourist importance in and around the lake town has lead to permanent attraction to the normal residents for establishing their residences, commercial complexes, hotels and other institutions as well. Also the developers and investors from outside have also contributed to the steep rise in the land value of this beautiful lake city.

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