

# A GEOGRAPHICAL STUDY OF POVERTY PROFILE OF NAINITAL TOWN, INDIA

NEETA PANDE<sup>1</sup>, RAVINDRA PANDE<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Associate Professor, Department of Botany, Department of Higher Education, Uttarakhand, INDIA

<sup>2</sup>Professor, Department of Geography, Kumaun University, Nainital, Uttarakhand, INDIA

## ABSTRACT

*Nainital township (29° 24' N, 79° 28' E), a popular hill resort of Kumaun Himalaya, is developed around a 1.4 km long and 0.45 to 0.25 km wide lake extending in NW-SE direction and having a maximum depth of about 27m. The lake is situated at an elevation of 1935 m at the prominent Nainia Peak towards north of the lake. Around a billion people live in informal settlements. Urban poverty in India is over 25 percent; some 81 million people live in urban areas on incomes that are below the poverty line. The nature of urban poverty poses distinct challenges for housing, water, sanitation, health, education. Interestingly, while the slum population is increasing, the number of slums has decreased – resulting in greater density. In most of the cases slum dwellers do not have access to clean water, sanitation and health care facilities. They face a constant threat of eviction, removal, confiscation of goods and have virtually no social security cover. The present paper is an attempt to address the issues related to urban poverty in Nainital – a hill town of historical legacy of British Empire.*

**KEYWORDS:** Socio-Economic Profile, Demographic Profile, Floating Population, Storm Water Drainage, SWM

Nainital is known as the Lake District of Uttarakhand due to predominance of lakes in the area. Presence of more than a hundred lakes has been recorded till the nineteenth century. The district boasts of some of the most scenic lakes in India. Nainital city, located at an altitude of 1,938 m is spread over an area of 11.73 sq km, of which Naini Lake covers 0.54 sq km. City of Nainital is the headquarters of Nainital Lake District and Kumaon Mandal. Of the hill towns in the State of Uttarakhand, Nainital occupies a unique place. Known for its salubrious climate and scenic beauty, the town is a popular destination in the northern tourist circuit. Nainital attracts thousands of tourists round the year. Nainital is also an important administrative town in the State having the High Court and well known institutions such as Academy Of Administration, Aryabhata Research Institute of Observational Sciences (ARIES), Office of Kumaon Mandal Vikas Nigam and Kumaon University.

## LOCATION AND ACCESSIBILITY

Nainital is situated at a distance of 34 km from Kathgodam, the gateway of Kumaon and the terminus of north eastern railway. According to the District Gazette Nainital is located approximately in between 80°14' and 78°80' east longitude and 29°00' and 29°05' north latitude. It is located at 304 kms from Delhi, 360 kms from Dehradun the state capital and 388 kms from Lucknow. By road,

Nainital is situated at a distance of 40 km from Haldwani. The city has three entry points by road. The major entry point is via Haldwani road (State Highway), the second entry point is via Bhowali road, both being at southern end of town at Tallital. The third entry point is via Kaladhungi road in the northwest of the town at Mallital. The nearest airport is at Pantnagar (71 km) in the plains.

Almora district lies to the north of Nainital and to its south lies the Udham Singh Nagar district. Champawat district flanks it in the east and district of Pauri Gahwal lies in the west. The nearby places of importance include Bhowali (11 km), Bhimtal (22 km), Naukuchiatal (26 km), Sattal (24 km) and Khurpatal (10 km). Cradled in the Himalayan foothills, Nainital acts as the gateway to Kumaon hills. The hill towns of Almora and Ranikhet are 65 km and 58 km distant respectively. Kausani, famous for its unparalleled view of 250 km wide Himalayan panorama is 116 Km away from Nainital. Pithoragarh is at a distance of 131 km while the Pindari Glacier, a popular destination for mountaineers and trekkers, is 236 km away. The world famous Jim Corbett National Parks is 117 km away from Nainital.

## HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Nainital has an important mythological reference as one of 64 'Shakti Peeths'. These centres were created

wherever parts of charred body of Sati (Goddess Parvati) fell when Lord Shiva was carrying around her corpse in grief. According to a legend, the left eye (Nain) of Sati dropped in the lake while her body was being carried by Lord Shiva to Kailash Parvat. Hence, the lake was given the name of Nainital, from where the city derives its name. Naina Devi was worshipped as the patron deity of the town. Naina Devi temple is located at the northern end of the lake. The temple was destroyed in the landslide which occurred in 1880. It was subsequently replaced by the present structure.

The British occupied Kumaon and Garhwal in 1815. In the year 1841, Mr P. Barron a European merchant and an enthusiastic hunter from Rosa, near Shahjahanpur was the first European who took great fancy to this land. Moved by the beauty of the sparkling lake he wrote: "It is by far the best site I have witnessed in the course of a 1,500 miles trek in the Himalayas." It is relatively lesser known that this region was called "Khasdesh" in ancient times and "Khasis" ruled this region before Christ was born. According to the data available, Nainital had become a popular hill resort by 1847. The Nainital Municipal Board was formally constituted in 1845. It was the second Municipal Board of North Western Provinces. In 1862, Nainital became the summer seat of the North Western Provinces. The town also became the summer seat of the U.P. Govt after independence. After 1963 the summer exodus of the U.P. Government was stopped. The Secretariat building is now being used by divisional and district offices.

### CLIMATE

Nainital, owing to its location, is colder than the rest of the hilly tract of Kumaon region. During monsoon, it gets heavy rainfall. The neighbouring areas of Almora and Ranikhet are warmer than Nainital. The monthly maximum and minimum temperatures in the town range between 28 degree C and 7 degree C. The rainy season begins earlier than in the plains and continues upto the end of September. The heaviest rainfall is observed on the outer slopes of the hills. As per the 1999 records, total average rainfall of district was 1338 mm. During winter, rains create a considerable fall in temperature.

### PHYSIOGRAPHY

Nainital lies in a valley of the Gagar range running east and west, which is bounded on the north by the China Peak, which rises to a height of 8,568 ft, continued by the Alma peak (presently known as Snow-View) and the Sher-KaDanda to the eastern extremity, where the ridge descends almost to the level of the lake.

Geographically the district is divided in to two zones viz. Hilly and Bhabar. The hilly region in outer Himalayas is known to geologist as Krol. The highest peak of the district is Baudhansthal 2,623 m high near Binayak adjoining Nainital town. The hilly region of the district has many lakes. Bhimtal, Sattal, Naukuchiatal, Khurpatal, Nainital, Malwatal, Harishtal, Lokhamtal, etc. are known bigger lakes of the district.

The foothill area of the district is known as Bhabhar. The name Bhabhar is derived from a tall growing grass growing in the region. The underground water level is very deep in this region.

Kosi is the main river of the district. River Kosi arising out of Koshimool near Kausani flows on the western side of the district. There are number of smaller rivulets like Gaula, Bhakra, Dabka, Baur etc.

### SOCIO-ECONOMIC PROFILE

In order to study the socio-economic profile of the city, secondary data (from various sources, including the Census of India) were collected and analysed. To supplement the analysed secondary data, primary data were obtained from the socio-economic survey, analysed and the results utilised. The following sections present an overall socio-economic profile of Nainital.

### DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE

Since the decade of 1901, the behaviour of decadal growth rate of population of Nainital municipal area has been erratic, varying in a wide range. The growth rates in some years, both positive and negative (Table 1 & Fig 1), are incredible. Conspicuously, the decadal growth rate of 43% in 1901 - 11 decade dropped to 10 % low in the following decade. Still more conspicuous, as the Table below indicates, is that Nainital had negative growth rate in the decade 1921-31 (- 9%), and no growth at all (0%) in the following decade. These phenomena give clear indication that during these two years there had been large exodus of population from this town. For, even the natural growth of population in the 1931 decade was overtaken by the rate of out-migration, and in the decade of 1941 was evened out by the rate of population exodus from the town. This situation was not repeated in the later decades but the trend of growth rate has not been smooth.

The decades 1961-71 and 1971-81 held some big surprises. While in the former decade the decadal growth rate shot up to as high as 71%, in the later decade it recorded a 4% low. By implication, 4% decadal growth rate (i.e. less

than 0.5 % per annum) being much lower than even the natural growth rate of population in India, it may be inferred that in this decade also, Nainital was de-populated. In the decade 1981-91 the growth rate shot up to 20%, and in 1991-2001 decade it recorded 26.67%, exceeding the national average of 21.53% for the same decade.

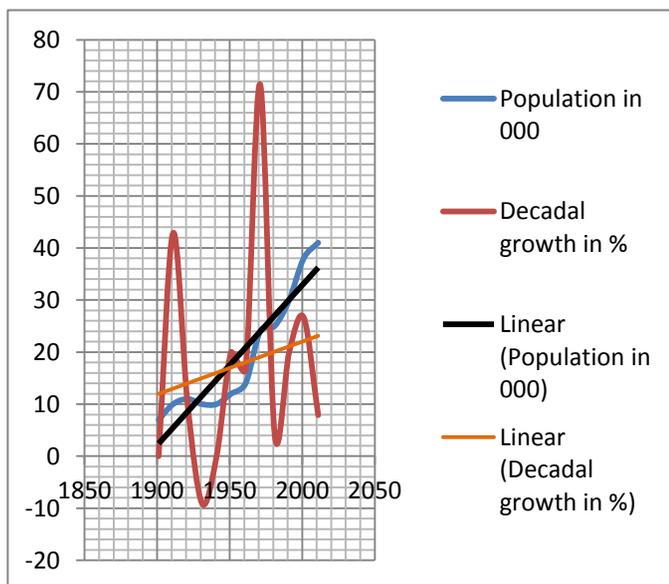
**Table 1**  
**Population and Decadal Change in Population**

Year	Population ('000)	Decadal Change (%)
1901	7	
1911	10	42.86
1921	11	10.00
1931	10	-9.09
1941	10	0.00
1951	12	20.00
1961	14	16.67
1971	24	71.43
1981	25	4.17
1991	30	20.00
2001	38	26.67
2011	41	7.89

Source: Nainital Mahayojana 1995 -2011 and 2001 – Census 2001

The volatility of the decadal population growth rate in Nainital does not have any ready explanation. Why it was de-populated in particular decades, why it shot up to the incredible high of 71% and such other questions are yet to be answered. However, it seems that the population growth rate of Nainital will stabilize in the coming decades.

**Fig 1**  
**Population and Decadal Change in Population**



Given the above constraint, and erratic behaviour of the decadal change in population, the 27% (or a simple average annual growth of 2.7%) change in the decade 1991-2001 is assumed as the base data for forecasting the population of this town. It is assumed that the population will grow at higher rates during 2005 to 2010 due to the initiatives taken for the development of infrastructure of this hill town, and then will gradually settle down by the year 2020.

The floating population of Nainital has been projected separately. In 2003, the floating (mostly tourist) population of Nainital was 4.24 lakhs, which increased to 5.18 lakhs by 2005, recording an increase of 22% over a period of three years. Its average annual growth rate was 7%. In Nainital, as is understood, like most of the hill stations, most of the tourists (floating population) visit this town in three summer months. Taking the tourist population of 2005 (5.18 lakhs) as the base, the average days of stay per tourist as 15 (source: discussion with Hotel Owners' Association and different stake holders), the average tourist load (including short and long duration stay) per day works out to 34,533 or say 35,000. From stakeholders' meetings and discussion with knowledgeable persons it emerged that the educational institutions, and training institutions (which are many in number where most of the students come from outside the town) and the University together account for at least 16,000 population. Besides, being district head quarter town and location of district court and High Court, and office of the Divisional Commissioner, large number of people visits the town on official business. The estimated number of such visitors is around 5,000. Thus, the total number of floating population in Nainital town works out to 56,000 in 2005. Applying the annual average growth rate of India's population (2%), the floating population (tourists) has been projected. Annex 3.1.1 provides year-wise projected population. The average household size, as per Census 2001, was 4.6.in number

**SOCIAL COMPOSITION**

The town of Nainital has a multi-ethnic population of various religious groups and they are living here through generations. Broadly eighty percent of population follows Hindu religion; the rest belong to Sikh, Muslim, Christian, Buddhism etc. The majority follow Kumouni traditions.

**AGE SEX STRUCTURE OF POPULATION**

The overall sex ratio in the sampled households is 915, which is higher than that reported (842) in Census of India 2001. The age groups of 15-44 have highest population for both the sexes.

**Table 2**  
**Age-Sex Distribution and Sex Ratio**

Age group	Male*	Female*	All*	Sex Ratio
All	52.23	47.76	100	915
0-4	5.6	3.7	4.7	
5-9	8.5	5.6	7.1	
10-14	5.1	8.9	6.9	
15-44	56.0	62.6	59.2	
45-59	19.2	14.0	16.7	
60+	5.6	5.1	5.4	

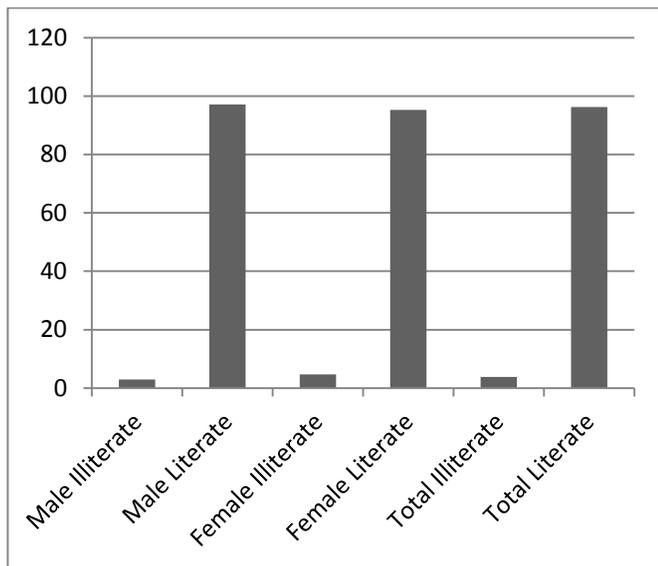
Data show households in percentage

**LITERACY**

Literacy, being an important indicator of social development, it affects the demographic characteristics and labor participation. As per Census 2001, literacy rate in urban Nainital is for 94.1 males and for 84.1 for females. The gender gap being 10. The survey results show there are 97.1 percent literate males and 95.3 percent females. Overall literacy is 96.2 percent. This data show a gender gap of 1.8.

**Table 3**  
**Literacy Status of Population Age 7 Years and Above**

Male*		Female*		Total*	
Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate	Illiterate	Literate
2.9	97.1	4.7	95.3	3.8	96.2



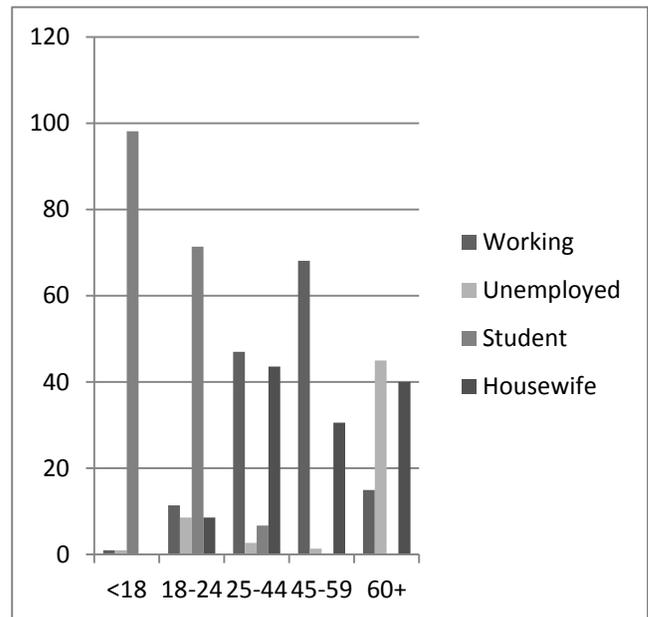
\*Data show households in percentage

**OCCUPATION**

Data on occupation shows that 32 percent of the workers are in gainful employment. 5.1 percent are unemployed, 39 percent are students, and 24 percent are housewives.

**Table 4**  
**Occupation by Age**

Category*	Age group (in years)					Total
	<18	18-24	25-44	45-59	60+	
Working	1.0	11.4	47.0	68.1	15.0	31.6
Unemployed	1.0	8.6	2.7	1.4	45.0	5.1
Student	98.1	71.4	6.7	-	-	38.9
Housewife	-	8.6	43.6	30.6	40.0	24.4



\*Data show households in percentage

**INCOME AND EXPENDITURE**

Majority of the sampled households are in middle income groups and 7 percent of the sampled population is below poverty line. Mean per capita monthly income of the families is Rs.3,411 and mean household income is Rs. 14,172. There is a considerable proportion of population in the middle expenditure group and it is apparent that they spend more than their income. This may probably be due to suppression of actual income by the respondents. Families in the higher income groups have maximum savings.

**Table 5**  
**Data on Income**

Income	In Rs.	Percentage household
<b>Per Capita Income per month</b>		
<b>Below Poverty Line (BPL)</b>	Upto 562	7.0
<b>Poor</b>	563-1999	29.0
<b>Lower-Middle</b>	2000-3499	27.0
<b>Upper-Middle</b>	3500-5999	21.0
<b>High</b>	6000+	16.0
<b>Mean Income</b>		3411.0
<b>Household Income</b>		
	Upto 2999	10.0
	3000-5999	13.0
	6000-9999	24.0
	10000-14999	20.0
	15000+	33.0
	Mean Income	14172.0

**Table 6**  
**Data on Expenditure and Savings**

Income	In Rs.	Percentage of household
<b>Household Expenditure</b>		
	Upto 2999	10.2
	3000-5999	19.4
	6000-9999	33.7
	10000-14999	19.4
	15000+	17.3
	Mean Expenses	10610.2
<b>Household Savings</b>		
	Upto 2999	7.1
	3000-5999	15.5
	6000-9999	29.8
	10000-14999	22.6
	15000+	25.0
	Mean Saving	4492.9

Table 7 shows the distribution of population by household composition and possession. Of the BPL families 43 percent do not have any legal right of their land, but 52 percent of the poor have legal rights of land. Middle and high income groups are mainly on leased land. A large portion of BPL families are staying in rented house, ownership of house is very low among them, but 29 percent is on leased land. Even in other income groups a large portion have house on leased land. Of the BPL families 71 percent are having kutchra houses. In the poor and lower-middle group houses are mostly semi-pucca in nature and about 62 percent higher income group families have pucca houses. Legal electric connection is available in most of the sampled houses. On an average 19 percent of all the families in the slums stays with some other family.

**Table 7**  
**Distribution of Population by Household Composition and Possession**

Characteristics*	Income Group				
	Below Poverty Level	Poor	Lower Middle	Upper-Middle	High
<b>Land Ownership</b>					
<b>Freehold title</b>	14.3	51.7	37	47.6	18.8
<b>Lease</b>	28.6	27.6	51.9	42.9	43.8
<b>Patta</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Joint patta</b>	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Other legal right</b>	14.3	3.4	11.1	9.5	37.5
<b>No legal right</b>	42.9	17.2	0	0	0
<b>House Ownership</b>					
<b>Own</b>	14.3	55.2	40.7	47.6	31.3
<b>Rented</b>	42.9	27.6	59.3	42.9	37.5
<b>Others</b>	42.9	17.2	0	9.5	31.3
<b>Mean rent per month</b>	1166.7	1275.0	1700.0	1831.4	1866.7
<b>House Type</b>					
<b>Kutchra</b>	71.4	27.6	3.7	0	0
<b>Semi-pucca</b>	28.6	37.9	63	38.1	37.5
<b>Pucca</b>	0	34.5	33.3	61.9	62.5
<b>Access to Electricity</b>					
<b>Yes</b>	100	96.6	100	100	100
<b>No</b>	0	3.4	0	0	0
<b>Electric Meter</b>					
<b>Yes</b>	100	92.9	88.9	90.5	93.8
<b>No</b>	0	3.6	7.4	9.5	6.3
<b>Not specified</b>	0	3.6	3.7	0	0
<b>Fuel Used</b>					
<b>Gas</b>	57.1	96.6	100	100	100
<b>Wood</b>	42.9	3.4	0	0	0

\*Data show households in percentage

Around 57 and 97 percent of the BPL and poor households respectively use gas as fuel for cooking. Of the rest 100 percent families have gas connection. Wood is also used in the poorer groups.

**MIGRATION**

It was found that on average all the sampled families are residing in the town for about 16 years. Only 4 percent families have moved in the town within last 5 years (Table 8). Of all the households 2.8 percent migrated from another town and 1.4 percent came from rural area. In Nainital even poor families are residing for 20 years or more. This contradicts the notion that poor settlements are created by in-migration from rural areas.

**Table 8  
Migration**

Migration*	Income Groups					
	All	BPL	Poor	Lower Middl	Upper Middl	High
No. of HH moved in last 5 years	4.2	0	0	10	5.9	0
From another town	2.8	0	0	5	5.9	0
From a rural area	1.4	0	0	5	0	0
Not specified	95.8	100	100	90	94.1	100

\*Data show households in percentage

**URBAN POVERTY PROFILE**

It is important to examine poverty with reference to its various dimensions including asset ownership. Accordingly project packages need to be worked out to reduce urban poverty especially the vulnerability of the poor and to enhance their assets in terms of labour, human capital, housing, social capital and so on.

**THE SITUATION IN SLUMS OF NAINITAL**

This section presents an overview of the urban poverty in Nainital. No recent studies are available about the extent of poverty levels in the town. According to information available from the NPP and the District Urban Development Agency (DUDA) the town has 10 main slums (A slum is a compact settlement with collection of poorly build tenement mostly of temporary nature, crowded together usually with inadequate sanitary and drinking water facilities in unhygienic conditions (Govt. of Uttarakhand 2002)) scattered across the town. Such area accounts for

about 21 percent of the total population of the town. Many of those are within the catchment area of the lake.

**Table 9  
List of Slums in Nainital**

S. No.	Name of Slum Areas	Population (Approx)
1	Narayan nagar	1947
2	HariNagar- Tallital	1200
3	NLRSADA line- Mallital	960
4	Committee line	750
5	Bakery compound	650
6	Kathbans	90
7	Bray Side- Mallital	1360
8	Mangawali	750
9	Rajpura	800
10	Dhobi Ghat	780
	Total	9287

Source- Document of Nainital Nagar Palika Parishad /DUDA (2006)

In order to obtain first-hand information, visits were made to the slums. An effort was made to assess the prevailing situation through - • Focus Group Discussions • Observation • Socio-economic Sample Survey.

**HOUSEHOLD PROFILE**

Average household size in the town as found in the baseline survey, is 4.5. Slum population in Nainital is 9,287. The slums on encroached land and on the hill slope in fringe areas are generally worse in comparison to other slums. Of the below poverty line (BPL) population 43 percent households and 14 percent of the people do not have any legal rights of the land. In the absence of ownership of land and clear policy to address their problems, the poor suffer from many inadequacies in terms of access to basic services and infrastructure. The situation as observed in the slums and the detail situation analysis is given below.

**WATER SUPPLY**

The town is served mainly by a piped water supply system. Water problem exists in many slums as supply is irregular in some localities and mostly supplied in odd hours- either at night or early morning. Duration of supply is mostly 1-2 hrs each in morning and evening, sometimes water is not supplied for a few days; so people are dissatisfied. In slums on elevation water rarely flows in the taps. So people carry water from the low areas to up. There is lot of wastage from stand posts in the low lying areas of NLRSA Line, as residents rarely take care in this regard

and as there is no scarcity of water. The residents expressed that they have no difficulty except that of unemployment.

Residents in Committee Line complained about worms in the water as the storage tank is not cleaned regularly. In slums on the hill slope like Alma House and Bray Side, the residents fetch water from tap for which they need to climb up the unpaved path. They store water in household storage utensils as supply is not sufficient. At Bray Side water is supplied since 4 am for about two and half hours. There is only one stand post for about 30 households, which is not sufficient, especially on hills. Supply in some slums is for fairly long duration - from 10 pm/6.30 am. No public stand post is present inside Mangawali slum, only one stand post is at about a distance of 70 ft. In Dhobi Ghat water is available through a pipe from cantonment area. The water flows under substantial pressure and over a duration of 2-3 hours each in morning and evening. Lot of wastage is evident here.

### SANITATION AND SEWERAGE

While the town is covered by sewerage system, areas of some slums like Harinagar, are not covered by sewerage. Most of the slum residents have their own latrine in their houses and they use soak pit or septic tank. A few families do not have latrine at home. They either go to community latrine or for open defecation. The areas where sewer line is absent, people have soak pit with their latrines.

### SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT

Solid waste situation is gloomy in many poverty pockets; there is no arrangement for solid waste collection. The residents, therefore, dump waste openly on street or down the hill slope. The drains and streets in slums are either rarely cleaned or never cleaned at all. In some places waste is taken in containers or bins. There is no scientific method of disposal. Waste is burned occasionally or thrown down.

### STORM WATER DRAINAGE

There are a few natural drainage channels in the catchment area of the lake, discharging into the lake. Due the natural slope there is no water logging. But during rains the drains overflow in the lower regions. Often rain water gets mixed with water from sewer. The big drainages are maintained by the PWD and the rest are by the local body. In Dhobi Ghat the street light has been disconnected; none of the residents could tell the reason.

### APPROACH ROAD AND STREET LIGHTING

In some slums approach road is not paved and very narrow. Other colonies, especially in lower zone, have proper approach road. Streets are in bad condition in the slums and street lights are less in number and many are not well maintained. Light bulbs are often non-functional.

### OTHERS

The slum residents are willing to pay for services. They are even willing to pay tax, but often the Municipal body is not paying attention to this. In some localities they are even willing to form local groups to manage their problems. Local people complained that there is lot of encroachments in the town. Many hawkers spread their merchandise on the streets of market area. This hinders vehicular movement in the town. The citizens complained that the encroachers are mostly from other states and they dirty the lake by open defecation. In Hari Nagar the overall situation is poor with poor housing and no Solid Waste Management (SWM). In Raish Hotel slum there is a cluster of Economically Weaker Section (EWS) housing on land slide prone area, the situation is poor and this may be relocated.

### SITUATION ANALYSIS

Adequate secondary data at household level on water supply, sanitation, solid waste management etc. are not available. Consequently, data from socioeconomic survey at household level were analysed and the findings are discussed in this section. Wherever secondary data are available, these are used in the situation analysis, supplemented by further field studies. The status of service delivery and service coverage as brought out in sample survey is summarised in the following sections.

**Table 10**  
**Source of Drinking Water**

Source of Drinking Water*	BPL	Poor	Lower Middle	Upper Middle	High
House connection	42.9	65.5	100	95.2	100
Public stand post	57.1	24.1	0	4.8	0
Others	0	10.3	0	0	0

\*Data show households in percentage

### WATER SUPPLY

Majority (85%) of all the households have in-house water connection. Of the BPL households 43 percent and 66 percent of the poor have house connection. The number of house connection increases with higher income. 57.1 percent BPL families and 24 percent poor collect water from public stand posts.

**Table 11**  
**Responsibility of Water Collection**

Gender*	BPL	Poor	Lower Middle	Upper Middle	High
Adult male	0	3.4	0	0	0
Adult female	71.4	93.1	100	100	93.8
Boy	14.3	0	0	0	6.3
Girl	14.3	3.4	0	0	0

\*Data show households in percentage

Water is mostly fetched by women (95 percent). Men (3.4 percent) from only poor income group share this responsibility. Of all children 2 percent (from each sex) help their family in fetching water. Support from girls is more in poorer groups. This signifies that household responsibilities are mainly carried out by the female member of the family.

Among all the families who collect water from outside the BPL families and 90 percent of the poor spend upto 45 minutes, rest of the poor travel more than 100 metre and spend 30-45 minutes for collection of drinking water. Mean distance travelled is 47 metre and mean time spent is 36 minutes for all.

### REFERENCES

- Nainital Mahayojana* 1995 -2011 (2011)
- Census of India* (2001)
- Census of India* (2011)
- Unpublished Document of Nainital Nagar Palika Parishad /DUDA (2006)