

Modified BG Prasad Classification of Socio-economic Status: An Important Tool for Researchers

Epari Ravi Kiran¹, Karri Vijaya²

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Abstract

In India many of the researchers commonly use BG Prasad's Classification of Socio-Economic Status (SES) scale in the process of doing a project, dissertation and even for publishing their work in a journal. As it is an income based scale it needs to be constantly updated taking into consideration the inflation and depreciation of the sovereign currency. Prasad's socio-economic status scales measures socioeconomic status of people of both rural and urban community based on the per capita monthly income of the family. The All India Average Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) is used to calculate the revised updated categories of income for September 2022.

Keywords: BG Prasad Socio-economic status scale; All India Average Consumer Price Index; Per capital monthly income.

INTRODUCTION

Several hospital and field or community based studies require assessment of socio-economic status of an individual/family. This reflects the affordability of health services, necessities and purchasing power of the same.

There are several methods or scales which have been proposed for classifying socioeconomic status which require assessment of socio-economic status of an individual/family: Rahudkar scale 1960, Udai Parikh scale 1964, Jalota Scale 1970, Kulshrestha scale 1972, Kuppuswamy scale 1976, Shrivastava scale 1978, Bharadwaj scale 2001.

However, social transformation and fast growing economy have rendered these scales ineffective in measuring the SES over the years.¹⁻⁸

Several experts have recommended different scales to measure the socio-economic status in both rural and urban areas. However, BG Prasad's classification originally devised in 1961 based on the per capita monthly income has been widely in use in India. It is computed as: Per capita monthly income = Total monthly income of the family / Total members of family.⁹

Prasad's classification takes into consideration of income as a variable and it is simple to calculate. This can be applied to calculate the socio-economic status in both rural and urban areas. BG Prasad later modified this classification in 1968¹⁰ and in 1970.¹¹ This was later modified by Kumar due to the inflationary trend in economy in 1993-94. An attempt has been made to link it with the All India Average Consumer Price Index (AICPI) and a modified classification has been proposed with a built in provision of its upgrading from time to time to make it relevant and useful.¹² Previously it was pointed out that any income based classification remains relevant to the study period only.¹³

Author Affiliation: ¹Professor & HOD, Department of Community Medicine, Gayatri Vidya Parishad Institute of Health Care & Medical Technology, Maridi Valley, Marikavalasa, Visakhapatnam 530048, Andhra Pradesh, India, ²Professor & HOD, NRI Institute of Medical Sciences, Bheemunipatnam, Sanghivalasa, Visakhapatnam 531162, Andhra Pradesh, India.

Corresponding Author: Epari Ravi Kiran, Professor & HOD, Department of Community Medicine, Gayatri Vidya Parishad Institute of Health Care & Medical Technology, Visakhapatnam-530048, Andhra Pradesh, India.

E-mail: drravikirane@gmail.com

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Modified BG Prasad Socio-economic status Scale (Revised)

The BG Prasad Socio-economic status Scale was first formulated in 1961 keeping the base of All India Consumer Price Index for Industrial workers (AICPI) for 1960 as 100.⁹ This was revised in 1982 by introducing a linking factor of 4.93 to convert AICPI (1982) from the new base of 100 to the old base AICPI (1960). This was revised again in 2001 by introducing a linking factor of 4.63 to convert AICPI (2001) from the new base of 100 to the old base AICPI (1982). These linking factors are provided by the Labour bureau.¹⁴⁻¹⁶

Recently, there was an amendment in the base year by the Ministry of Labor Bureau and the base year was changed to 2016 by introducing a linking factor of 2.88.¹⁷ The main objective of this change was to bring out the new series of All India and individual center wise Consumer Price Indices for Industrial Workers based on the latest consumption

pattern of the working class population.

Calculation of the new income ranges

AICPI for Industrial Workers for September 2022 = 131.3=131 (approx.)¹⁸

Multiplication factor = current index value (131)/ base index value in 2016 (100)=1.31.

The new income value can now be calculated using the following equation:

New income value = Multiplication Factor × Old Income Value × 4.63 × 4.93 × 2.88.

where 4.63, 4.93, and 2.88 are the linking factors given by the Labor Bureau.

The updated values for the per capita monthly income (in Rs./month) for September 2022 are given in Table 1.

Table-1: Modified BG Prasad socioeconomic status classification (revised)

Socioeconomic status class	Per capital monthly Income (INR)	
	BG Prasad's SES classification 1961	Modified BG Prasad's SES classification 2022
I (Upper Class)	100 and above	8612 and above
II (Upper middle class)	50-99	4306-8611
III (Middle class)	30-49	2584-4305
IV (Lower middle class)	15-29	1292-2583
V (Lower class)	<15	<1292

CONCLUSION

Socioeconomic status Classification forms an important indicator of the health status and health seeking behavior of an individual or a family. Taking into account of the change in inflation and thereby the change in price of services and goods in the country it is compulsory to constantly update the income based socioeconomic status scales or classifications.

This article is an attempt to educate and update the young researchers of the changes in socioeconomic status scales with the passage of time and encourage them to create new socioeconomic status scales. This is necessary so as to include all the prices of the ever evolving goods and services in a dynamic scale not only for research but also to guide the government of the day in reaching out to the economically weaker sections of the society with various welfare and health programmes.

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