

Updated Socio-Economic Status Scales: A Review of the Modified Kuppuswamy and Modified BG Prasad Indices for April 2025

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Sir,

Socio-economic status (SES) refers to the relative position of an individual or family within society. This position is evaluated based on various factors, including ownership of cultural and material resources, income, and membership in specific social groups.¹ Key indicators such as nutritional health, mortality rates, and overall morbidity demonstrate how SES impacts an individual's well-being. Furthermore, understanding how individuals' access and utilize healthcare services is crucial, particularly for public health researchers. Collecting socio-demographic information is essential and constitutes a fundamental component of many research papers and dissertations. The Modified Kuppuswamy Scale and the Modified BG (Brahm Govind) Prasad Scale are widely recognized tools for categorizing socio-economic status.² The BG Prasad Scale is applicable in both urban and rural contexts, whereas the Kuppuswamy Scale is predominantly used in urban areas. It is essential for public health researchers to en-

sure these are regularly updated to reflect current socio-economic realities. This article aims to assist early-career researchers by providing the recent data as of April 2025.

MODIFIED BG PRASAD CLASSIFICATION

The Modified BG Prasad scale classifies individuals according to their economic status based on monthly per capita income, with annual adjustments to account for inflation and fluctuations in the prices of consumer goods prices. Each month, the Labour Bureau, under the Ministry of Labour and Employment, calculates the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for industrial workers.^{3,4} This index is derived from data collected at 317 commercial centers located in 88 major industrial zones across the country. For the month of April 2025, the All-India CPI-IW was 143.5.⁵

Since its introduction in 1961, the CPI has undergone periodic adjustments, with the base year established as 1960 (CPI value of 100). These adjustments have

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included linkage factors (LF) for the periods between 1960 and 1982 which is 4.63, linkage factors (LF) for the periods between 1982 and 2001 which is 4.93, and linkage factors (LF) for the periods between 2001 and 2016 which is 2.88.^{6,7}

The formula used to update the income values is:

- Updated Income Values for April 2025=Correction Factor × Old Income Value of 1961
- To calculate the correction factor, we used the linkage factors (LF) for the periods between 1960 and

1982 which is 4.63, linkage factors (LF) for the periods 1982 and 2001 which is 4.93, and linkage factors (LF) for the periods 2001 and 2016 which is 2.88. These factors were together multiplied with April CPI IW and divided by 100, the base index for 2016.

- Correction Factor= $4.63 \times 4.93 \times 2.88 \times 143.5^*/100$ =94.33

The revised per capita monthly income values for April 2025 are presented in Table 1.

Table 1: Modified BG Prasad Scale for April 2025 (Rupees/Month)

Socio Economic Class	Original BG Prasad classification of 1961 (Rupees/month)	Correction factor for April 2025 ($4.63 \times 4.93 \times 2.88 \times 143.5^*/100$) =94.33)	Modified BG Prasad classification for April 2025 (Rupees/month)
I- Upper	≥100	94.33	94.33 x100 ≥9433
II- Upper Middle	50-99	94.33	94.33 x 50 4717-9432
III- Middle	30-49	94.33	94.33x 30 2830-4716
IV-Lower Middle	15-29	94.33	94.33 x 15 1415-2829
V- Lower	<15	94.33	<1415

*All India CPI (IW) for April 2025

MODIFIED KUPPUSWAMY SOCIO-ECONOMIC SCALE

The Modified Kuppuswamy Scale, originally designed to assess individual SES, has been adapted to evaluate the SES of families. The assessment is based on three primary factors: the education of the head of the family, the occupation of the head of the family, and the family's total monthly income. Each factor is divided into categories; each assigned a specific score. Education ranges from 1 to 7, occupation from 1 to 10, and income from 1 to 12. The total score, which can range from 3 and 29, determines the socio-economic class, with 29 representing the highest possible score. The CPI-IW is the most commonly used index for updating socio-economic classifications, as it accurately reflects the spending patterns of a typical working-class family.

We have the inflation rate figure for April 2025 is 2.94.⁸ The base year for calculating income figures is taken as 2016.⁹ The Modified Kuppuswamy Scale assesses socio-economic status (SES) based on three parameters: education, occupation, and total monthly family income. Unlike the BG Prasad Scale, which is based on per capita income from 1961 and requires cumulative correction factors for long-term

comparability, the Kuppuswamy Scale is primarily applied in urban settings and focuses on current family income levels. Therefore, it is more appropriate to update the income component of the Kuppuswamy Scale using the year-on-year inflation rate, as this method reflects recent economic changes and maintains the scale's relevance.⁹

The selection of 2016 as the base year for calculations corresponds with the revision of the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) by the Labour Bureau, Government of India. In October 2020, the CPI-IW base year was updated from 2001 to 2016 to more accurately reflect contemporary consumption patterns.¹⁰ Utilizing the 2016 base year ensures consistency with national standards and enhances the accuracy of SES assessments.

The inflation factor (conversion factor) is calculated as follows:

Inflation Factor= $((\text{CPI of the current year} - \text{CPI of the previous year}) \times 100) / \text{CPI of the previous year}$

Where, Consumer Price Index (CPI) for the current year (April 2025) is 143.5, CPI for the previous year (April 2024) is 139.4⁸ and Inflation factor is 2.94

Table 2 reflects the expected incomes of April 2025.

Table 2: Total monthly family income for Modified Kuppuswamy Scale along with the scores

Monthly family income updated for 2016	Inflation Rate ($143.5^* - 139.4^{**}) \times 100 / 139.4$	Monthly family income updated for April 2025	Score
≥40,430	2.94	≥118864	12
20,210–40,429	2.94	59417–118863	10
15,160–20,209	2.94	44570–59416	6
10,110–15,159	2.94	29723–44569	4
6060–10,109	2.94	17816–29722	3
2021–6059	2.94	5942–17815	2
<2021		<5942	1

*CPI (IW) for April 25 is 143.5; **CPI (IW) for April 24 is 139.4

The educational and occupational scores for the head of the family are presented in Tables 3 and 4, respectively. The total score is calculated by summing the scores from the education, occupation, and income factors. This overall score is then utilised to categorize households, as illustrated in Table 5.

Table 3: Scoring for education of the head of the family as per Modified Kuppuswamy Scale

Education of the head of the family	Score
Profession or honours	7
Graduate	6
Intermediate or diploma	5
High school certificate	4
Middle school certificate	3
Primary school certificate	2
Illiterate	1

Table 4: Scoring for occupation of the head of the family as per Modified Kuppuswamy Scale¹¹

Occupation of the head of the family	Score
Legislators, senior officers and managers	10
Professionals	9
Technicians and associate professionals	8
Clerks	7
Skilled workers and shop & market sales workers	6
Skilled agricultural and fishery workers	5
Craft and related trade workers	4
Plant and machine operators and assemblers	3
Elementary occupation	2
Unemployed	1

Table 5: Modified Kuppuswamy socio-economic status scale

Total score	Socio-economic class
26-29	Upper (I)
16-25	Upper middle (II)
11-15	Lower middle (III)
5-10	Upper lower (IV)
<5	Lower (V)

DISCUSSION

While the Modified BG Prasad and Modified Kuppuswamy Scales remain the most widely used tools for socio-economic classification in India, certain limitations must be acknowledged. Both scales primarily focus on income, education, and occupation but do not adequately consider other important determinants of socio-economic status, such as asset ownership, housing conditions, and access to essential services like sanitation and healthcare. Furthermore, these classifications are based on national averages and may not fully capture regional disparities in the cost of living, purchasing power, and occupational structures across India. For example, income thresholds that define socio-economic classes in urban metropolitan areas may not accurately reflect the realities of rural, tribal, or economically underdeveloped regions.

A comparison of the updated income thresholds for April 2025 with those from the previous year (April

2024) shows a modest upward adjustment, driven by an inflation rate of 2.94%. This incremental change highlights the gradual nature of economic shifts and the necessity for continuous monitoring to maintain relevance. It also emphasises the importance of utilising SES classifications alongside other socio-demographic indicators to provide a more comprehensive understanding of a population's well-being and access to resources.

CONCLUSION

Socio-economic status plays a pivotal role in shaping health outcomes, influencing healthcare access, and determining the quality of life for individuals and families. The Modified BG Prasad and Modified Kuppuswamy Scales remain essential tools for socio-economic classification in India, assisting researchers, policymakers, and healthcare professionals. Regular updates to these scales are vital to ensure their relevance and accuracy in reflecting contemporary socio-economic conditions. This article aims to support early-career researchers by providing updated SES classifications for April 2025, thereby contributing to informed public health research and evidence-based decision-making.

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