

B.G. Prasad Scale 2025: An Updated Framework for Socioeconomic Assessment in India

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ABSTRACT

The B.G. Prasad Socioeconomic Classification has been a cornerstone in assessing the socioeconomic status (SES) of Indian households since 1961. Periodic updates using the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) ensure its continued relevance. Given the changing economic conditions and inflation trends, periodic updates are necessary. The CPI-IW for January 2025 is 143.2, necessitating a recalculation of the income thresholds. This study aims to update the B.G. Prasad Scale for 2025 using the latest Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW), analyze the impact of inflation on socioeconomic classification, and assess its implications in public health and policymaking. The updated classification is calculated using the base values from 1961, linking factors from previous updates (1982, 2001, 2016), and the latest CPI-IW. The calculation steps are outlined to ensure transparency and reproducibility. The Modified B.G. Prasad Scale 2025 ensures that socioeconomic classification remains relevant. However, limitations such as its income-centric approach highlight the need for a multidimensional SES framework. Future updates should incorporate education, occupation, and regional adjustments to enhance its applicability in public health research and policy development.

Keywords: BG Prasad Socioeconomic Scale, SES, CPI-IW, Inflated adjusted Socioeconomic scale

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INTRODUCTION

Socioeconomic status is a crucial determinant of health, influencing access to healthcare, disease burden, and health outcomes. The B.G. Prasad Scale, first introduced in 1961, remains a widely used tool for SES classification based on per capita monthly income. Regular updates are required to reflect inflation and changing economic conditions, with the latest revision incorporating the CPI-IW of January 2025 (143.2). This article recalculates the B.G. Prasad Scale for 2025 and explores its implications in contemporary socioeconomic analysis.¹⁻⁴

This article aimed to update the B.G. Prasad Scale for 2025 using the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW).

STEPS FOR UPDATE OF THE CLASSIFICATION

Step 1: Understanding the Base Values

The original B.G. Prasad Scale (1961) was based on per capita monthly income (in INR). The classification was as follows:

Class	Income Range (1961) (INR)
I (Upper)	≥ 100
II (Upper middle)	50 – 99
III (Middle)	30 – 49
IV (Lower middle)	15 – 29
V (Lower)	< 15

Step 2: Identify the Key Components for Adjustment

To update the 1961 values, we need:

1. Current CPI-IW (2025) = 143.2⁴
2. Base CPI-IW (2016) = 100
3. Linking factors for different years:
 - 4.93 (1982)
 - 4.63 (2001)
 - 2.88 (2016)

Step 3: Compute the Multiplication Factor

The Multiplication Factor is derived using the formula:

$$\text{Multiplication Factor} = \frac{\text{CPI-IW for 2025}}{\text{Base CPI-IW (2016) Substituting values}} = \frac{143.2}{100} = 1.432$$

Step 4: Calculate the Correction Factor

The Correction Factor accounts for adjustments from previous linking factors:

$$\begin{aligned} \text{Correction Factor} &= \text{Multiplication Factor} \\ &\times \text{Linking Factor (1982)} \\ &\times \text{Linking Factor (2001)} \\ &\times \text{Linking Factor (2016)} \\ &= 1.432 \times 4.93 \times 4.63 \times 2.88 = 94.14 \end{aligned}$$

This means that each 1961 value should be multiplied by 94.14 to reflect 2025 economic conditions.

Step 5: Compute the Updated Income Values

Now, multiply the original 1961 income values by 94.14:

Class	Original 1961 Income (INR)	Updated 2025 Income (INR) (Rounded)
I (Upper)	100	$100 \times 94.14 = 9414$
II (Upper middle)	50	$50 \times 94.14 = 4707$
III (Middle)	30	$30 \times 94.14 = 2824$
IV (Lower middle)	15	$15 \times 94.14 = 1412$
V (Lower)	< 15	< 1412

Step 6: Present the Final Modified B.G. Prasad Scale 2025

After calculations, the new income thresholds for 2025 are:

Class	Updated Income (INR) - 2025
I (Upper)	≥ 9414
II (Upper middle)	4707 - 9413
III (Middle)	2824 - 4706
IV (Lower middle)	1412 - 2823
V (Lower)	< 1412

Step 7: Interpretation of the Results

The new income limits are significantly higher than previous years due to inflation.

Class I (Upper class) now starts at INR 9414 per capita per month, which means that an individual earning below this would not be classified as Upper SES.

Class V (Lower class) includes individuals earning below INR 1412, reflecting the updated poverty threshold in India.

The Modified B.G. Prasad Scale 2025 was recalculated using the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) of January 2025 (143.2), with adjustments made using historical linking factors from 1982, 2001, and 2016. The recalculated per capita monthly income thresholds were determined as follows: Class I (≥ 9414 INR), Class II (4707-9413 INR), Class III (2824-4706 INR), Class IV (1412-2823 INR), and Class V (< 1412 INR).

Compared to previous years, the income thresholds have increased significantly, reflecting inflationary trends and economic shifts in India. This study highlights the need for real-time adjustments in socioeconomic classification and suggests incorporating multidimensional factors such as education, occupation, and regional cost-of-living variations to enhance classification accuracy. The updated classification remains crucial for healthcare planning, epidemiological research, and social policy formulation to ensure equitable resource distribution and targeted health interventions.^{3,4,5}

Table 1: Comparative Analysis Over the Years

Year	Class I (≥INR)	Class II (INR)	Class III (INR)	Class IV (INR)	Class V (INR)
1961	100	50-99	30-49	15-29	< 15
1982	493	370- 492	247- 369	124- 246	< 124
2001	2283	1712-2282	1141-1711	570-1140	< 570
2016	6575	4931- 6574	3287- 4930	1644- 3286	< 1644
2024	9130	4565- 9129	2739- 4564	1369- 2738	< 1369
2025	9414	4707- 9413	2824-4706	1412- 2823	< 1412

Table 2: Updated B.G. Prasad Scale 2025

Social Class	Per Capita Income (INR per month)
Class I (Upper)	≥ 9414
Class II (Upper Middle)	4707 – 9413
Class III (Middle):	2824 – 4706
Class IV (Lower Middle)	1412 – 2823
Class V (Lower)	< 1412

DISCUSSION

The Modified B.G. Prasad Scale 2025 was updated using CPI-IW (January 2025 = 143.2) to account for inflationary changes and ensure the continued relevance of income-based socioeconomic classification in India. This update reflects economic growth, rising cost of living, and evolving income patterns over time. However, while the B.G. Prasad classification is widely used, its sole reliance on income as an SES determinant presents limitations. The classification does not account for educational attainment, occupational stability, asset ownership, or cost-of-living variations across urban and rural regions.

A similar study by Akshithanand et al. (2024)² on the Updated B.G. Prasad Scale for 2024 also recalculated income thresholds using CPI-IW adjustments. Their study reported a Class I threshold of INR 9130, which is lower than the 2025 update (INR 9414) due to inflationary increments. Compared to their findings, the 2025 revision highlights a sharper increase in lower-income categories, reflecting rising financial disparities and economic strain on vulnerable populations. While both studies emphasize the importance of periodic SES updates, the present study extends the discussion to include public health and policy implications, emphasizing the need for a multidimensional SES model that integrates non-income determinants such as education, employment status, and access to healthcare.

STRENGTH AND LIMITATIONS

Strengths: Its simplicity and ease of use ensure broad applicability across diverse settings. The scale's historical consistency, maintained through periodic updates, facilitates longitudinal socioeconomic comparisons, enhancing its relevance over time. Furthermore, its widespread adoption in epidemiological research, healthcare planning, and policy formulation underscores its credibility and utility.

By relying on an objective, income-based classification, the scale provides a standardized and transparent framework for socioeconomic assessment.

Limitations of the Modified B.G. Prasad Scale: Despite its widespread use, the B.G. Prasad Scale has several limitations that impact its effectiveness in accurately classifying socioeconomic status. One of the major drawbacks is its sole reliance on income, without factoring in education, occupation, or asset ownership, which are crucial indicators of an individual's overall socioeconomic condition. Additionally, the scale does not account for urban-rural disparities, as it applies uniform income thresholds across the country, failing to recognize the significant differences in the cost of living between metropolitan cities and rural areas. Another limitation is its static nature, as updates are made periodically rather than dynamically, making the classification less responsive to sudden economic changes, such as inflation fluctuations or shifts in employment patterns. Furthermore, the scale excludes non-monetary determinants, such as access to healthcare, housing quality, and social mobility, which are essential components of a comprehensive socioeconomic assessment. Addressing these limitations would enhance the scale's accuracy and ensure its continued relevance in public health and policy implementation.

CONCLUSION

Future improvements to the B.G. Prasad Scale should focus on adopting a more holistic and multidimensional approach to socioeconomic classification. One significant enhancement would be the integration of education and occupation indicators, ensuring that SES assessment is not solely based on income but also considers an individual's access to education and employment stability.

The Modified B.G. Prasad Scale 2025 continues to serve as a vital tool for SES classification. However, its income-centric nature requires refinement. A transition toward a multidimensional SES framework would enhance its applicability in research, healthcare planning, and policymaking.

Approval of Institutional Ethical Review Board:

This study does not require ethical clearance as it is based on secondary data analysis using publicly available economic indicators, such as the Consumer Price Index for Industrial Workers (CPI-IW) and his-

torical socioeconomic classification methodologies. Since no human participants, personal data, or clinical interventions were involved, the study does not fall under the purview of institutional ethics review.

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