

Review of: "Who Belongs to the Middle Class? Identifying Them Using Monthly Family Income"

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This article carries out a simple empirical exercise of deriving the inflation-adjusted income cut-offs of three social classes (upper class, middle class, and lower class) of Bangladesh from HIES 2016 data using an existing formula. It definitely has potential for becoming an insightful study. The article has already received many valuable suggestions. These are a few observations that the authors may consider if they have not been considering already to transform this into a full-fledged paper:

- Bangladesh has made a reputation as a socioeconomic success story over the years, although it has been experiencing strains in multiple areas for the past few years. Since income is a fundamental economic aspect that needs to be considered for any kind of poverty alleviation, social benefit, or financial inclusive policy, the readers do not get to understand what this exercise will add to the literature that has not already been discussed for a country like this. At this stage, the article does not clearly mention what research gap is being addressed or any compelling reason for carrying out this particular exercise. Maybe the authors can look into the recent troubling trend to establish why such a social class analysis is needed at this time.
- The article rightly states how complicated social classes can be and narrows down the scope to income-based social classes. This section (i.e., the literature section) can be elaborated with a proper background about research on social classes, or rather socioeconomic classes, in the developing world, followed by different concepts and methods of identifying and evaluating classes. At this stage, the article considers only two approaches (wealth index and social class stratification through income) for determining social class and provides no reference or clearer explanation for the second approach. The definition of the middle class also does not have a much clearer explanation. 'Other approaches to socio-economic stratification' also becomes a slightly misleading heading, as the two approaches mentioned here have already been discussed and no additional method is mentioned here.
- The article does not provide any methodological detail of computing the monthly household income values - whether it is only the salary/daily wage or considers income from other sources as well. If any existing table has been modified, it does not shed any light on the modification method. It will be really helpful if the readers get an overview of the dataset used and the estimation procedure. The methodology part is almost completely missing.
- Additional exercises that can be carried out: comparison of classes across rural-urban areas, comparison at state or regional levels, etc.
- Minor observations: small grammatical errors and missing words ["Rural median family income: $338.48/219.86 \times 11,149.77 = \text{BDT } 17,165.35$ " - unit missing in LHS], Reference - following a standardized referencing system is strongly



recommended for a journal article.

All the best!