

SCALING METHODS IN RELATION TO POSSESSION OF DURABLE ARTICLES IN RURAL AREAS

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MEASUREMENT of economic level of living forms an important part of the family living studies. Dietary habits and the nutritional value of food, standard of clothing, type of housing, possession of durable articles, etc. are the various aspects of the measurement of level of living. In the present paper an attempt is made to examine the extent of the possession of durable articles of consumption in rural areas and to formulate devices for summing up information relating to possession of durable articles. Possession of durable articles could be said to be dependent upon the economic ability of the family, social customs and the availability of the article. Possession of a number of durable articles is likely to indicate a higher level of living than non-possession. It was, therefore, believed that variations in the possession would reflect to a certain extent differences in the levels of living.

The durable articles would be of different costs, varying durability, etc. Hence the problem of summing up such information into a single index needs to be considered. Various procedures could be adopted to determine the weights of each individual article. The sum of the weights of articles possessed by a family will be the index of possession of durables for that family. In the present paper four weighting systems have been considered. The first one, which is the most simple but crude method, gives an arbitrary weight of "1" for possession of each of the durable articles; neglecting altogether the cost of different articles an equal weight is assigned to every article. This will hereafter be referred to as A-scale. In the second method each article is given weight in proportion to its cost. The distance between the weights of any two articles will be directly proportional to the difference in the costs of these two articles. This will be denoted as V-scale. The other two scales are based on the percentage of families possessing a particular article. High proportion of families possessing a particular article indicates ease of acquiring that article and in such a case the article will receive a low weight. On the other hand high weight will be attributed to articles possessed by a small proportion of families. In one of these two scales viz. Reciprocal or R-scale, the reciprocal of the proportion of families possessing the particular article is taken as the weight of that article. Lastly sigma method* of scoring is used. In this method the weight

* This method is widely used in the construction of scales for measurement of socio-economic status.