

What is PROUT?

PROUT is an acronym for PROgressive Utilization Theory, a socio-economic philosophy that synthesizes the physical, mental and spiritual dimensions of human nature. The objective of PROUT is to provide guidance for the evolution of a truly progressive human society.

PROUT is an alternative to the outmoded capitalist and communist/collectivist socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches has adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity.

Combining the wisdom of spirituality with a universal outlook, and the principle of social equality with economic democracy, PROUTist thinkers and activists are creating a new civilizational discourse and planting the seeds for a new way of social living.

A few basic tenets of PROUT are:

Spirituality and Progress

The evolutionary path of human beings has been to continually raise our consciousness and so we have a yearning to realize our higher consciousness. True progress is movement that leads to self-realization (knowing internally that individual consciousness is one with Universal Consciousness) and expressing our spiritual qualities such as compassion and love for all beings.

Material and intellectual developments make life easier and expand our awareness, but can have both positive and negative effects and so do not necessarily constitute progress unless they contribute to human welfare by enabling deeper spiritual well-being.

The progressive orientation of society is maintained by making continual adjustments in the use of physical resources, mental capabilities and spiritual potentialities based on principles of distribution and utilization that promote happiness and welfare, in accordance with neo-humanist values. These are value based on spirituality that promote love for, and the welfare of, all entities in the universe. Human beings should endeavour to build their social relations and institutions to facilitate the attainment of our highest potentialities based on such principles and values.

Economic Democracy

Political democracy and economic democracy are mutually reinforcing. Social welfare requires a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development and environmental sustainability, and between individual and collective interests.

The enhance the economic welfare of all people, economic democracy is required based on local economic planning, local governmental management of natural resources and key industries, cooperatively managed economic enterprises for most of the economy (with a residual small businesses sector), and socially agreed upon limits on the individual accumulation of wealth.

By decentralizing the economy and making sure decision-making is in the hands of local people through socio-economic boards, we can ensure the adequate availability of food, clothing, shelter, health care and education for all. A decentralized economy can better ensure that the ecological systems of the Earth are not exploited beyond their capacity to renew themselves. Environmental stewardship and responsibility is a requisite, as all people are dependent upon the ecological systems of the world for their own survival and well-being.

Basic Necessities Guaranteed to All

The basic necessities of life must be a constitutional birth right of all members of society. People cannot attain their highest human potential if they lack food, clothing, shelter, health care and education. Meaningful employment with a living wage is fundamental to economic planning to ensure adequate purchasing capacity for all the basic necessities of life.

In addition, people must have enough to also obtain common amenities such as transportation and communication. Proper provision should also be made so that people can participate usefully in society through access to special amenities and incentives so as to render greater social service.

The standard of guaranteed minimum necessities should advance with increases in the economy's productive capacity. The same applies in relation to common and special amenities and the provision of other incentives.

Leadership

For a benevolent society, it is essential that leaders are morally principled and dedicated to serving society as part of their personal progress. Authority should not be centred in the hands of individuals, but should be expressed through collective leadership.

The viability of political democracy rests on an electorate possessing three factors:

- education;
- socio-economic and political consciousness;
- ethical integrity (or moral consciousness).

Freedom

Individuals should have full freedom to acquire and express their intellectual pursuits, ideas, creative potential and inner aspirations. They should have full freedom of spiritual pursuits and practices. Such intellectual and spiritual freedom will strengthen the collective well-being of society. Restrictions should only be placed on actions clearly detrimental to the welfare of others.

Constraints need to be placed on the accumulation of physical wealth, as excessive accumulation by a few results in the deprivation of many. It leads to scarcity, centralization of economic power and disempowerment in economic, social and cultural affairs. Everyone's economic, social and cultural rights must be protected and fulfilled.

Cultural Diversity

In the spirit of universal fellowship, people must have guaranteed rights to develop and express their local, ethnic and indigenous cultures, languages, customs and traditions. Social harmony also requires racial equality and coordinated cooperation among different ethnic groups.

The true spirit of social fusion lies in establishing unity in diversity. For social justice and a healthy social order, individual and cultural diversity must be accepted and encouraged. Practices should not be detrimental to the welfare of others.

Women's Rights

The struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women is to be supported, as also movements for social equality and the fight against inequality based on sexual differences. The value of women in human society, including value of labour and contributions generally, is equal to that of men in both individual and collective life.

Society should have a coordinated, cooperative leadership between males and females. There must be equal rights for women and men, with equal opportunities offered to each and all. This means the political, economic, social and cultural empowerment of women throughout the world.

Science and Technology

Scientific knowledge and technology are assets to humanity, for our common benefit. Through their proper use the physical hardships of life decrease and knowledge is gained about the secrets of life and the universe. Time is freed for cultural, mental and spiritual pursuits.

However, the utilization of scientific knowledge and development of technology should be under the guidance of neo-humanist values and requires ethical leadership, so that discoveries and innovations are used for the welfare of all. That is, cultivation of science and development of civilization go together. Without this, technology is often abused by profiteers and the power-hungry, resulting in exploitation and various kinds of destruction.

World Government

The formation of a world governance system should be gradually developed and supported, having a global bill of rights and global constitution which, among other things, guarantees fundamental human rights and freedoms including the minimum necessities of life for all individuals and communities. There should be a common penal code for the entire world. Nations should settle regional and international disputes based on a global legal system.

A global political system has the advantages of free movement of people, lessening of people's fears and tensions, less bloodshed, and less military expenditure.