

## 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 goal 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 socio-economic paradigms. Neither of these approaches have adequately met the physical, mental and spiritual needs of humanity. PROUT seeks a harmonious balance between economic growth, social development, environmental sustainability, and between individual and collective interests. Combining the wisdom of spirituality with a universal outlook and the struggle for self-reliance, proutist thinkers and activists are creating a new civilizational discourse and planting the seeds for a new way of living.

A few basic tenets of PROUT are:

### **Spirituality and Progress**

Human beings are on an evolutionary path toward realizing their higher consciousness. True progress is movement that leads to self-realization and spiritual qualities such as compassion and love for all beings. Material or intellectual gains do not necessarily constitute progress unless they contribute to deeper, spiritual well-being.

The progressive orientation of society is maintained by making continual adjustments in the use of physical resources and mental potentialities in accordance with spiritual and Neo-humanistic values. Human beings are encouraged to construct economic and social institutions to facilitate the attainment of our highest potentialities.

### **Economic Democracy**

Political democracy and economic democracy are mutually inclusive. PROUT advocates economic democracy based on local economic planning, cooperatively managed businesses, local governmental control of natural resources and key industries, 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, we can ensure the adequate availability of food, shelter, clothing, 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 is a requisite for people who are dependent upon these systems 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, shelter, clothing, health care and education. Meaningful employment with a living wage must be planned to ensure adequate purchasing capacity for all basic necessities. The standard of guaranteed minimum necessities should advance with increases in the economy's productive capacity.

## 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 consciousness,
- ethical integrity.

## Freedom

Individuals should have complete freedom to acquire and express their ideas, creative potential and inner aspirations. Such intellectual and spiritual freedom will strengthen the collectivity. 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.

## Cultural Diversity

In the spirit of universal fellowship, PROUT encourages the protection and cultivation of local culture, language, history and tradition. For social justice and a healthy social order, individual and cultural diversity must be accepted and encouraged.

## Women's Rights

PROUT encourages the struggle against all forms of violence and exploitation used to suppress women. PROUT's goal is coordinated cooperation, with equal rights between men and women. PROUT seeks the economic, social and spiritual empowerment of women throughout the world.

## Science and Technology

Scientific knowledge and technology are potential assets to humanity. Through their proper use the physical hardships of life decrease, and knowledge is gained about life's secrets.

Time is freed for cultural and spiritual pursuits. However, the development and utilization of scientific knowledge must come under the guidance of spiritual and Neo-humanist values and ethical leadership. Without this, technology is often abused by profiteers and the power-hungry, resulting in destruction and exploitation.

## World Government

PROUT supports the creation of a world governance system having a global bill of rights, global constitution and common penal code in order to guarantee the fundamental rights of all individuals and nations, and to settle regional and international disputes. As the global economy becomes decentralized, it will be advantageous to also have a global political system.

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