

On June 5th 1959, Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar said:

"The society needs a stir of life, vigour and progress, and for this Ananda Marga advocates the Progressive Utilization Theory (Prout), meaning thereby progressive utilization of all factors. Those who support this principle may be termed 'Proutists.'"

The following points summarize the main aspects of Prout:

Based on spirituality

"Prout is a spiritual theory.
It will be established by seeing One in many."

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

All long for the Supreme, either knowingly or unknowingly. All want infinite happiness; perfect peace. Spiritual thirst is quenched with the attainment of the Supreme Bliss. So spiritual practice is essential. For spiritual practice the mind is required, but for the mind to function properly the body must be properly maintained. Physical requirements must precede psycho-spiritual development and elevation. So spirituality is linked to the socio-economic necessities. Therefore, as a socio-economic theory, Prout is based on spirituality.

Outlook of cosmic fraternity

See Neohumanism.

Universality in constitutional structure

For cosmic fraternity, the following points are necessary:

1. Common philosophy of life (that of cosmic inheritance).
2. Same constitutional structure, including world language and government, and a world militia to settle regional and international disputes. The constitution should include a bill of rights ensuring security to all animals and plants, the guarantee of purchasing power to all people, and the fundamental human rights – spiritual practice, cultural legacy, education and indigenous linguistic expression.
3. Common penal code, with the emphasis on reform rather than penalty, and the acceptance of the individual back into the society once reformed.
4. Availability of the minimum essentialities of life.

Recognizes four basic varnas of human psychology

Varna means "mental colour." There are four basic varnas in human society: shudra (labourer), ksatriya (warrior), vipra (intellectual) and vaeshya (merchant). Prout recognizes that the "Social Cycle" moves according to the dominance of a particular varna at any one time: from shudra to ksatriya to vipra to vaeshya, followed by a "Shudra Revolution" and the start of a new cycle.

Moral leadership

For the collective good, leaders in positions of authority must have strong moral integrity, exemplary conduct, and selfless dedication to the society. Authority should not be vested in the hands of individuals, but rather in collective leadership.

"Social control will have to be in the hands of those who are spiritually elevated, intelligent and brave all at the same time." Such mentally developed and spiritually elevated leaders will be known as sadvipras, "those spiritual revolutionaries who work for progressive changes in human elevation on a well thought and pre-planned basis, by adhering to Yama and Niyama."

Political centralization

Prout advocates a federal (world) government for overall coordination, supervision and legislation, combined with local (immediate) governments for local economic planning, coordination, and control of local resources.

Federal and local governments would have a supreme board of sadvipras in addition to legislative, executive, and judicial boards.

In any electoral process, the electorate (voters) – as well as the candidates – would need to possess the following three qualities in order to validate the election:

1. Morality
2. Education
3. Socio-economic-political consciousness

Self-sufficient socio-economic zones

The Sanskrit word for "society" is samaj. In the real sense of the term it means the collective body of those engaged in social progress, i.e. "the marching of all together in unison, inspired by the same ideology, towards a common goal."

For practical implementation, samajes should be formed as self-sufficient socio-economic zones, established on the basis of such common factors as ethnicity, culture, language, economic situation, and geographic location.

Being a member of a samaj should not depend on one's birthplace, nationality, or any other limiting factor. The only criterion is that one should merge one's own socio-economic interest with the socio-economic interest of the concerned samaj.

As time goes on, "each samaj will merge with neighbouring samajes when necessary criteria are met. This will improve their collective wealth." Merger of samajes with increasing socio-economic uniformity will ultimately lead to one universal samaj.

Hence samaj is "universal in spirit, but regional in application."

Economic decentralization

While political power must be in the hands of centrally placed moralists, economic power and decision-making should be under local control, because it is the local leaders and planners who have local sentiments, understand the problems of the area, and are able to implement policies quickly and effectively (as opposed to centralized economic planning and production, which is inherently inefficient and leads to economic and social disparity).

The freedom of the local people to make their own economic decisions is thus called economic democracy. For it to be successful, the minimum requirements of life must be guaranteed to all (through increasing purchasing capacity), and no outsiders should be allowed to interfere with the local economy.

Cooperatives

Cooperatives are "the best expression of human sweetness in the physical realm" because they function as units of coordinated cooperation, and each member has the feeling of oneness with the job because he or she contributes directly to the operation and decision-making process of the cooperative, and gets ample opportunity for the development of his or her latent potentialities. Incentives provide motivation, and the wealth and resources of many individuals are combined for the benefit of the co-op as a whole. Each member has the feeling of ownership because he or she owns shares in the cooperative according to land, capital or equipment contributed.

Cooperatives will be the optimal means of production and distribution of goods and services in any decentralized economy. In actual fact, a decentralized economy is vital to their success. Other essential factors are morality, a strong administration, and the whole-hearted acceptance of the system among all members of the co-op.

Types of cooperatives include agricultural, industrial (for production of goods), consumer (for distribution of goods), and additional (service, banking, housing, medical, etc.).

Agriculture

Because food is the most essential commodity, agriculture is the most important part of the economy and should have the same status as industry, including wage rates.

For optimal agricultural production, the socialization of agricultural land should be implemented. This has to be done psychologically (because many people have a strong sentimental attachment to their land) in four stages:

1. All uneconomic land holdings brought under the cooperative system.
2. All land compulsorily brought under the cooperative system.
3. Rational redistribution of land according to need and capacity.
4. Production and distribution fully under the cooperative system.

Industry

Prout advocates a three-tiered industrial structure:

1. **Key Industry:** Large and/or complex industries, including all essential goods and services, run on a no-profit-no-loss basis by each local government. In addition to providing essential goods and services, they would also act as the nucleus of other industries.
2. **Large-Scale Industry:** Cooperatives set up close to the main key industries of raw supply, producing demi-essential goods and services. These industries would be the main sector of the economy, run on a marginal (rational) profit basis.
3. **Small-Scale Industry:** Small and simple concerns run as private enterprises, producing non-essential (luxury) goods and services on a marginal profit basis. They would have to maintain adjustment with the cooperative sector.

In general, production should be for consumption rather than profit, preference should be given to local labour and the utilization of local raw materials, there should be no importation of locally available goods, and only highly processed goods should be exported.

Balanced economy

Initially, 30-40 percent of people should work directly in agriculture (food is the first priority), 20 percent in agro-industry (post-agricultural processing and distribution), 20 percent in agrico-industry (pre-agricultural equipment and supplies), 10 percent in trade and commerce, and 10 percent in the service sector (administration, education, law, medical, etc.).

Eventually, by decreasing the number of people working in the agricultural sector, 20-30 percent of people should work in non-agricultural industries. This will increase the standard of living and collective wealth of the society.

Maximum utilization of all resources and potentialities

Maximum utilization means that any particular object serves the maximum number of people for the maximum amount of time. This implies modernization, including automation and mechanization.

"To use equipment of the era of undeveloped science in the era of developed science is by no means a sign of progress."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

The effects of modernization in an economy where production is for consumption rather than profit are: reduced work hours, increased quality and quantity of production, the saving of

time and energy, and the freedom of people to use their leisure hours in psychic and psycho-spiritual pursuits.

Rational distribution

Rational distribution implies the distribution of wealth primarily according to one's needs, and secondarily according to one's special merit and skills. It does not mean equal distribution, as that would destroy work-incentive and result in stagnancy.

"Those who think of equating all, verily think of destroying all."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

At the same time, it implies a ceiling on individual wealth to restrict excessive accumulation. The psychic and spiritual wealth of the world is unlimited, but physical wealth is not. The hoarding of physical wealth, therefore, results in the deprivation of others.

"If a person acquires and accumulates excessive wealth, he or she directly curtails the happiness and convenience of others in society. Such behaviour is flagrantly antisocial."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Happy blending of individual liberty and collective responsibility

The welfare of the individual is inextricably linked to the welfare of the collective, and vice versa. So individual liberty must not reach the stage at which it curtails collective welfare.

"One will have to promote individual welfare motivated by the spirit of promoting collective welfare."

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Minimum requirements of life guaranteed to all

The minimum requirements of life (food, clothing, shelter, education and medical care) must be provided to all, through appropriate employment and adequate purchasing capacity.

"If a single person dies due to lack of the minimum requirements of life, the whole society is to blame."

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Purchasing capacity (and not per-capita income) is the true index of standard of living.

"In order to raise the level of the minimum requirements of people, the best policy is to increase their purchasing capacity."

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Incentives for special merit and skills

To encourage the evolution of human endeavour and achievement, incentives for special merit and skills should be provided on the basis of the social value of those skills.

Three types of incentive:

1. Opportunity and congenial environment (individual and collective).
2. Material reward (preferably in the form of consumer goods).
3. Encouragement to do more good work.

Ever-increasing standard of living and collective wealth

"Consumption should be brought up to the level of collective wealth." This means that as the collective wealth increases, the standard of the minimum necessities and incentives should also increase, resulting in a greater standard of living. This process should be ever-increasing. But the gap between necessities and incentives should decrease with time.

"Increasing the minimum standard of living of the people is the indication of the vitality of society."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Full local employment

Employment should be available to every able person. Rational distribution of wealth will ensure a high average wage and adequate purchasing capacity. Combined with that, modernization will allow reduced work hours for the same wage, but this is only possible if production is for consumption, not profit.

Meaningful employment should be provided to each person according to his or her most developed capability. At the same time, he or she should be given appropriate scope and opportunity to unfold less-developed potentialities, depending on the resources available.

Socio-economic security for those unable to work (due to illness, debility or old age) is essential. This can be accommodated if production is for consumption rather than profit.

Appropriate science and technology

Science is "for service and blessedness," hence for the benefit of society as a whole. For this reason it must be under moralist (sadvipra) control.

"Always utilize science for the welfare of humanity. Those who misuse science for destructive purposes are enemies of humanity. Science should always be cultivated with a sentient motive. The collective welfare of living beings will remain a distant dream unless science and worldly power are fully controlled by sentient people."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Ecology

Included in the bill of rights of the constitution should be the provision of complete security to all animals and plants. Ecologically sound policies include integrated farming, afforestation, water conservation, alternative energy, and the provision of wildlife refuges such as animal sanctuaries and plant reserves.

"Human beings must be cautious from now on. They must restructure their thoughts, plans and activities in accordance with the dictates of ecology. There is no alternative."

Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar

Freedom of expression

Prout encourages freedom of expression in all aspects of life beneficial for the collective good, while at the same time discouraging the cruder expressions of life detrimental to the welfare and progress of society.

The fundamental human rights are spiritual practice, cultural legacy, education and indigenous linguistic expression.

As a constitutional right, education should be free for everyone up to the highest level.

Art – as with science – is "for service and blessedness," and should always be in the spirit of welfare.

The media – along with the arts and education – should be completely free from any political interference, either direct or indirect.

Policies adjusting with circumstance and leading to social progress

The principles of Prout are unchanging, but policies must adjust with circumstance. "The proper use of any object changes according to changes in time, space and person."

"The method of utilization should vary in accordance with changes in time, place and person, and should be of progressive nature."

Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

Progress in the real sense of the term only occurs in the spiritual sphere. Therefore social progress is the collective movement toward the supreme spiritual stance.

Progressive utilization of all factors

Prout stands for the progressive utilization of all crude, subtle and causal potentialities of human and cosmic existence, and the channelization of those potentialities into the spiritual flow, the eternal Supreme Being.

For the welfare and happiness of all

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