

P R O U T
PROGRESSIVE UTILIZATION THEORY

Prout Alliance

www.proutalliance.org



**The Prout Alliance Quarterly
Newsletter:**

**PA CONNECTION
June, 2023**

“You must have a flaming moral purpose so that greed, oppression and exploitation shrivel before the fire in you.”

P.R. Sarkar, Supreme Expression II, 148



Photo credit: istock

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Production for Consumption Not Profit

by Shiraksha Mohan

The Progressive Utilization Theory or Prout is an alternative, holistic socio-economic system to replace the failing capitalist model of economy. With an emphasis on rational utilization and equitable distribution of the planet's resources, Prout offers a model to build a world in which all people and the planet thrive harmoniously.

Prout advocates for organization of an economy based on Five Principles of Decentralized Economy.

1. Control of the local resources: Local people control the local resources of a region.
2. Purpose of production: Production is based on consumption, not profit.
3. Organization of cooperative enterprises: Local cooperatives produce and distribute essential commodities.
4. Local labor: Full employment of local people in cooperatives and economic enterprises.
5. Local markets: Regulation of local markets by removing non-locally produced commodities.

The second principle of a decentralized economy suggests, production is based on consumption, not for profit. This raises many questions. What does production only for consumption mean? Why should there not be a profit motive? Does this mean economic enterprises receive no profit at all? How is this implemented and what does it change about how we think about the economy?

What is consumption in a Prout system?

Answering this question brings clarity about the nature of consumption and production in Prout. Consumerism-based economies like capitalism view consumption of commodities as the primary driver of profits. Hence limitless consumption of goods and services is encouraged, whether one needs them or not. Capitalism encourages a high degree of debt among consumers. Communism, on the other hand, is a command economy in which the nature of consumption is decided by the government or a central authority, without consideration of the diversity of human needs and choices. Prout is a bottom-up economy that starts at the grassroots and works its way up.

In Prout, there are several stages of consumption. Consumption in the first stage is needs-based, to guarantee all the basic requirements of life. Consumption in the second phase provides additional amenities to meritorious people. After everyone's basic needs are met, these amenities create incentives for individuals to use their skills to contribute to the society.

There must be a constant effort to bridge the gap between basic needs and extra amenities, in an effort to constantly increase the living standard of people. This leads to a progressive increase in consumption in a Prout economy. When viewed in conjunction with the first principle of a

decentralized economy, it is apparent that this increased consumption should not overshoot a socio-economic region's resource capacity to produce goods and services.

Local people of a socio-economic region, who manage their local resources, should be equipped with enough knowledge about the region's limitations and utilize their resources wisely, to prevent resource depletion or ecological degradation. Local people will plan their local economies based on their needs and the availability of resources.

Consumption can also take the form of common amenities shared by the community and special amenities for the sick and disabled. Any excess production is distributed rationally among people to enrich the living experience. Common amenities can include art galleries, museums, libraries, sports facilities, swimming pools, concert halls and parks. These amenities, in a Prout system, are considered a form of consumption of goods and services and can contribute immensely to increasing standard of living.

Mindless consumerism is discouraged within Prout's model of consumption, but Prout honors consumption based on diversity of human needs. Consumption always follows a progressive upward trend.

This brings us to the question, "Why should there not be a profit motive?"

When profit becomes the motive for production in an economy, economic enterprises fail to make good judgements about their production standards, ecological impact of their economic activity, working conditions of labor force and other such factors that affect lives and livelihoods. We come across many instances where there is a strong correlation between profits and disasters.

[A train carrying toxic chemical derailed](#) in East Palestine, Ohio causing pollution of soil, air and water in the area of the derailment. The damage caused by this event to the environment and people may linger for many years to come. The railroad company operating the train that derailed did not want to assume responsibility for the disaster initially, and later offered minimum assistance. Railroad companies ignoring critical safety standards to cut costs of operations and maximize profits have been identified as a root cause of many such disasters.

Similarly, think of the ecological damage caused by society's excessive reliance on fossil fuels, a reliance orchestrated to enrich some countries and corporations at the cost of worsening global warming and climate change.

Profit motive leads to production monopolies, the concentration of wealth, and superfluous production that can overshoot a region's ability to regenerate its resources. In a profit-oriented system such as capitalism, solutions to day-to-day problems are commodified by attaching a price tag to them. For example, healthcare is a basic requirement of life and a human right. But even basic medical care is unaffordable to many in the United States. When an essential industry like healthcare is run for profit, it leads to the situation where people are deprived of their basic right to live. Should this be an outcome of our economic activities?

A healthy economy should serve the people and the planet. But in a profit-oriented economy, people and the planet serve the economy to maximize the material gains of a few individuals. Prout, on the other hand, prohibits the production and distribution of essential commodities based on profit motive.

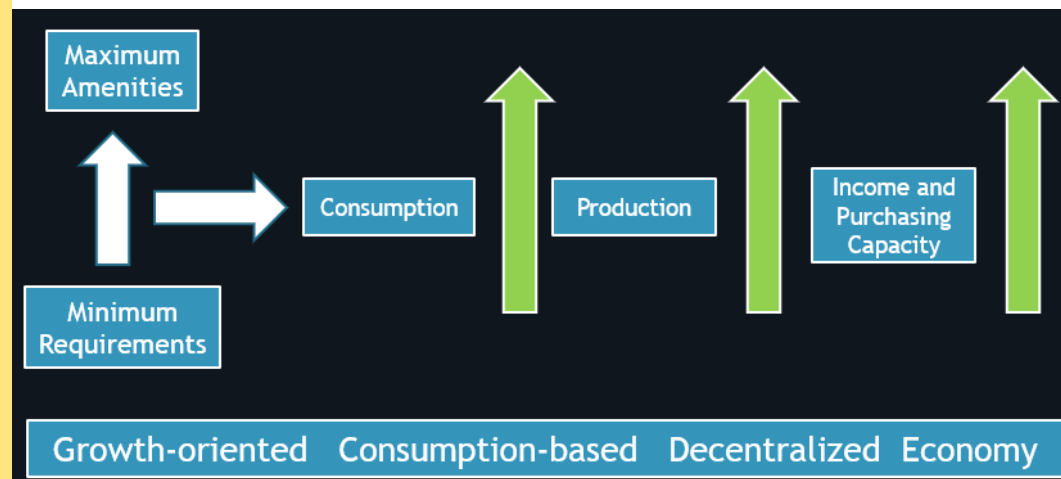
Does this mean economic enterprises receive no profit at all?

How would any economic enterprise continue operating without making profits to reinvest in production and operations? Prout places emphasis on rational profits. The suggested upper limit for profits cooperatives can make is roughly 15% of the cost of production. This profit is also based on rational costs of production, taking into account cost of raw materials, cost of labor, cost of transportation and storage, depreciation, etc.

Most of the production in a socio-economic unit is undertaken by cooperatives which employ local people (principle #3 and #4 of decentralized economy), and non-local commodities are removed from the market (principle #5 of decentralized economy). Progressive growth in local consumption in a Prout model, as discussed earlier, creates incentives for local cooperatives to produce more and grow in safe spaces without competition from external market monopolies.

The profits enterprises make naturally see an upward trend with an upward trend in consumption and production. Profits are reinvested in the local region as wages for local people, and for more production. Therefore, in a growth-oriented Prout economic model, profits are always ensured even if they are not the primary goal of production. An increased purchasing capacity and economic security follow.

Growth in consumption, growth in production, growth in profits and wages.



Prout also recognizes the need to have key industries operated by the public sector. These are industries like transportation, telecommunications, mining, production of fertilizers, etc., that require a bigger scale of operation and affect the lives of many, beyond the local region. These enterprises must be run on a “no profit, no loss” basis, and must be managed by the immediate local government.

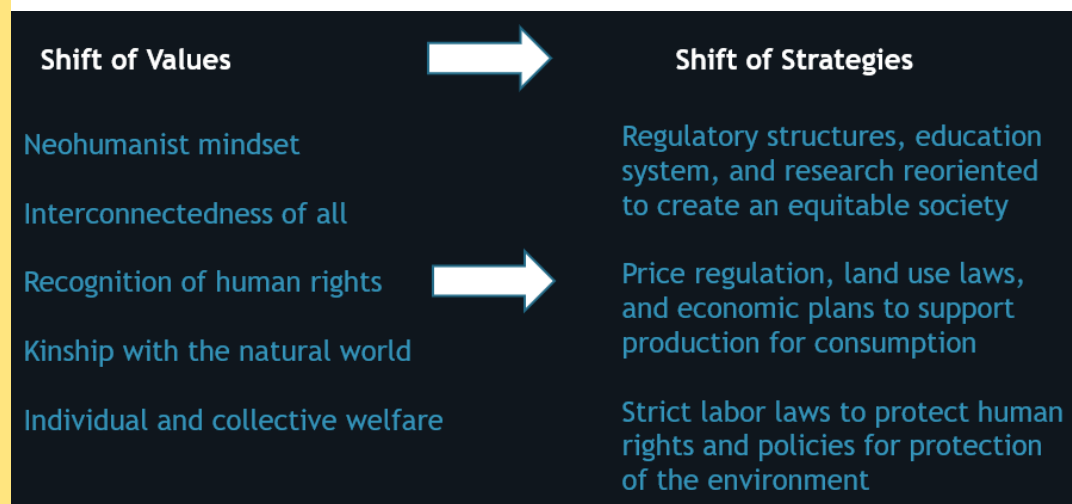
Private sector should be restricted to goods and services deemed as luxury or non-essential. This ensures private businesses with profit motives are unable to adversely affect the lives of common people. Prout’s system of decentralized economy discourages monopolies that exist solely for profits. Hence, private sector too will be forced to adopt pricing strategies to gain comparative advantage over other competing enterprises and not just focus on profits.

How is this implemented? What does it change about how we think about the economy?

“Production for consumption, not for profits”. This is an idea that calls for a shift of mindset and values. The way we think about structuring our economies will also have to undergo a paradigm shift once we have understood the nature of consumption and production in Prout, both of which evolve progressively based on human needs and changing conditions of life. A shift of values in the psychological sphere translates into a shift of strategies in the practical sphere.

Our personal values determine how we structure our lives. Our values also determine how we structure the larger economy and society. Prout is rooted in Neohumanism, a worldview characterized by love, care and compassion for all beings of the universe. Socio-economic strategies based on this worldview tend to be caring, inclusive, fair, and non-exploitative. When our strategies for consumption and production are based on Neohumanist values, these strategies tend to support the idea of considerate consumption-oriented production, which is not motivated by profits alone.

A shift of values starts with Neohumanist education. Embracing Neohumanism empowers us to take benevolent actions, to recognize the interconnected nature of all life forms, to acknowledge everyone’s right to live a good life, and realize individual wellbeing lies in collective wellbeing. A shift of values that occurs with the wholehearted acceptance of Neohumanism leads to shift of strategies for organizing our society and economy. Prout principles guide the shift of strategies.



A shift of strategies includes education and research to study the society’s consumption and production patterns. Regulatory structures and policies based on such research outcomes become strategies to move our economy away from profit-oriented production. A shift towards Neohumanism helps lawmakers frame laws to protect local cooperatives, human rights and the environment through strong legislation. All these measures go hand-in-hand within a decentralized economy where the focus is on socio-economic empowerment and not on profits.

Neohumanism, as the bedrock of Prout strategies, inspires inclusive economics. This model of economic growth acknowledges that collective and individual well-being are inter-dependent, and also honors the rights of the natural world. Progressive socio-economic strategies guided by Prout follows a shift of values guided by Neohumanism.

Prout Alliance held its second Members Quarterly Meeting on May 17, 2023. About 16 people attended.

These meetings provide a space for PA members to speak with one another, present ideas and suggestions to PA and provide hope and inspiration by learning what others are doing to create positive change for humanity.

The meeting included the sharing of information by each PA Committee and Group Liaison, breakout sessions with small group discussions on local Prout activities, suggestions how PA can support members' efforts and ideas about future Prout projects.

The meeting included a special speaker, Dada Vedaprajananda. He shared what activities he has involved in lately including creating Podcasts on relevant social topics, managing the annual Songs for Social Change Competitions, and writing books and songs. His Podcasts can be found on our website.

The next Members Quarterly Meeting will be held on Aug. 9, 2023.

Submitted by Nina Shapiro, Chair

Outreach Committee Report:

The newly formed Prout Alliance Outreach Committee has hit the ground running! We have met several times and organized our first public presentation in Westchester County, New York, with Chandra Shekhara as our guest speaker discussing his new book: *A Proposal for a World Constitution based on the Works of Prabhat Ranjan Sarkar*.

The announcement went out to fifteen hundred grassroots activists, clergy, elected officials, union representatives, press contacts and community leaders who are on the WESPAC, Westchester People's Action Coalition, email distribution list and fourteen people registered for the Zoom with a smaller number in actual attendance. The discussion was substantial and stimulating.

The Outreach Committee has also connected Dada Maheshvarananda to Manhattanville College, in Westchester County, New York, where he will be giving a Prout based social justice presentation to over thirty students in September, 2023.

Marc Nevas has also brought Prout concepts into a group that he belongs to in Silver City, New Mexico. He invited Jason Schreiner to give a presentation to a local permaculture group at their local meeting on the topic: "How to Connect Permaculture Sites into an emergent Basis for a Bioregional Economy." The presentation was very well received with the coordinator of the Permaculture group referring their members to a Prout website for more information.

Our committee would like to create a Prout Alliance Speakers Bureau with expert speakers on various Prout topics. We would like to develop a professional slide deck that members of Prout Alliance can use to introduce Prout and Prout concepts in their local area.

We also encourage members of Prout Alliance to sign up for Dada Maheshvarananda's Spiritually Speaking Club to help improve our confidence and effectiveness as public speakers. The sessions are on Tuesdays and Saturdays. Please contact Dada for details at maheshvarananda@gmail.com. If you would like to be considered for our Speakers Bureau, please send your letter of interest to outreach@proutalliance.org.

Together, we look forward to making Prout a household name!

Submitted by Nada Khader



Prout Research Institute *Asheville* *North Carolina USA*

Prout Research Institute Report:

The construction of the Prout Research Institute building and future headquarters of Prout Alliance is 60% complete.

A progressive foundation in SE Asia approved a grant of \$50,000 for our work. We still need more funds to make this shared dream a reality. Please see the website pri.institute

Any person who can volunteer their labor for a week or more this summer will become physically stronger, receive delicious food to get healthier, and free board and spiritual satsaung company to become more inspired. How can you say no to that offer?

The PRI is designing an 8-week online course with the Neohumanist College of Asheville on "Neohumanism and Prout: A holistic model for socio-economic progress". Anyone willing to help us with this task, please contact [Dada Maheshvarananda](#)

Submitted by Dada Maheshvarananda, Director





Membership Committee Report:

The MC has been working to clarify the two-tiered system of membership, Supporting and Active criteria. To that end, we now have a functional membership page on the website for new and returning members to automate some of the initial contacts of the Prout Alliance with people interested in becoming members.

In the future, we plan on implementing a system of Mentorship and other resources for the support and integration of new PA members.

Submitted by Alex Jackimovicz

Networking Group Report:

The newly re-formed Networking Group, consisting of Nina Shapiro, Liaison and Didi Ananda Ruchira started working together several months ago. The group expanded it's Twitter following and created an account on Post.Net

Report on Twitter from Didi Ananda Ruchira for April 1 -22, 2023

"There are 79 legitimate followers. About 17 tweets/retweets have been made, and about 4 comments on others' tweets made. There was 1 engagement. Average 4-18 views per tweet. This isn't much.

We should work on gaining an audience. To do that (for free) would be thru active engagement in others' tweets where PA can be better seen. Simply putting out our own tweets is fairly useless. Our own tweets become useful to people who have seen us on others' feeds, come to our profile to check us out. So I will try to find more occasions to make comments."

Submitted by Nina Shapiro, Networking Group Liaison

Treasurer's Report:

Effective May 17, 2023, John Linkhart resigned as the first PA Treasurer, and Prakash Laufer succeeded him in that critically important role.

John and Prakash will both continue to serve on the PA Steering Committee.

New Finance Committee is Created: Volunteer Chair Needed

The PA Steering Committee is standing up a Finance Committee (FC) to address numerous PA financial matters, such as ensuring PA has sufficient and reliable financial capacity to fulfill its Mission and to establish an application and administration process for requesting funds needed to finance projects focused on implementing practical applications of Prout and/or Neo-Humanism principles.

Prakash and John will serve as interim FC Co-Chairs until a Chair can be recruited. It is hoped that someone will be willing to serve as the Chair or at least serve on the FC with them. Please consider becoming active with the Finance Committee or in some other capacity with PA as it's one of the ways you can actually help make a difference within society. Feel free to contact John with any questions or comments you have about this report or Prakash for any future PA financial questions or comments you may have.

If you are interested, please contact them at steering@proutalliance.com

Respectfully Submitted By John Linkhart, Outgoing PA Treasurer

SPRING MEMBERSHIP DRIVE

4/1/23-6/30/23

ANONYMOUS DONATION MATCH UP TO \$2500

Please consider upping your donation this year to help develop a strong base fund for service projects in the coming year(s).

Thank you for your support!

Deep Activism Group Report:

The Deep Activism for Proutists (DAFP) Affinity Group has been meeting since November 2022. Led by Alex Jackimovicz of the Alliance for Economic Democracy, our meetings combine elements of study circles, discussions, and presentations on topics related to Deep Activism. Alex has been developing a new theory and system of activism since 2016, drawing inspiration from various sources and incorporating ideas from P.R. Sarkar. The aim is to make these concepts accessible and practical for non-Proutist activists.

Our DAFP group has already completed 10 sessions, focusing on the foundational topic of "Inner Work of the Organizer." In our upcoming sessions over the next two months, we will delve into the comparison between shallow reform-based action and activism versus deep systemic change, exploring the concepts of the Shallow vs. the Deep.

On April 13th, as part of the Prout Alliance monthly educational seminar series, Alex delivered a 1-hour public seminar, "Deep Activism: Foundations for a New Activism" (available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=93TRhTkAemg&t=3719s>). This seminar highlighted the significant differences and importance of the activism of Inner Work and Systems Change, and their inter-relatedness, which are often overlooked in traditional activist work.

If you are interested in learning more or would like to attend our twice-monthly affinity group sessions, please contact Alex at alex.jackimovicz@gmail.com.

Submitted by Alex Jackimovicz, Deep Activism Group Chair

Prout Alliance Education Committee Report:

The Education Committee continues to create high quality educational materials, for free. Past presentations can be viewed by linking to the website under the Resources tab: <https://proutalliance.org/>

The 17th consecutive Seminar in the series sponsored by the Prout Alliance (PA) and organized by the PA Education Work Group (Ed WG) composed of Mark Friedman, Tapan Mallik and John Linkhart will be on June 8, 2023.

It is entitled The Biopsychology of Cooperation by Dada Maheshvarananda, a monk, published author, teacher, activist and founder/Executive Director of the Prout Research Institute in Asheville NC. This Seminar is open for registration; see link below.

Other Seminars are already scheduled through October of this year and the Ed WG is in the process of arranging the Nov, Dec 2023 and early 2024 Seminars, so please stay tuned for those announcements.

As a reminder, all Seminars in the PA series are recorded and available for review by interested people. They can be found at either proutalliance.org or proutalliance.wildapricot.org.

The Educational Committee invites your suggestions about topics and/or people that you would like to hear content experts address, as well as any volunteers with a topic they are knowledgeable about and would be willing to do a Seminar in the series.

We also invite any feedback about the Seminars that people are willing to share to help improve the series value and benefit for people attending them or reviewing the recorded Seminars.

Questions, suggestions, etc may be sent to the PA Ed WG at steering@proutalliance.org

To register for educational events go to ProutAlliance.org/events

Submitted by John Linkhart and Mark Friedman



Save the Date!

The PA Annual Gathering October 6-8, 2023

FEATURING

World Renowned Keynote Speaker

Sohail Inayatullah,

UNESCO Chair in Futures Studies. IIUM. Professor. Tamkang University.
Editor, the Journal of Futures Studies, and researcher, www.metafuture.org.

**Topic: The futures of the world system;
Prout and the grand transition**

This annual event will be held in person at The Prama
Institute near Marshall, N. Carolina with online options

More information/registration will be available soon

The next PA quarterly Members Meeting will be on
August 9th

Save the date!

Prout Sisters Retreat

ART FOR SYSTEMS CHANGE 2023

Online event:

Western Hemisphere

July 15th, 15:00

UTC

Eastern Hemisphere

July 15th 2:00

UTC

In-Person event:

Ananda Gaorii,
in Denmark

July 17 - 18



Artwork by Mulganai

- Workshops
- Dance
- Art & Music Share
- Embodiment sessions
- Gathering & networking
- Yoga & Meditation
- Global community
- In-person event includes wholesome, nutritious vegan food and outdoor time.

Retreat cost:

Online: Free

(donations graciously accepted)

In-person: 450 DK krone

(includes three meals and one night's accommodation)

For more information: www.proutsisters.com

Prout Alliance Administration

steering@proutalliance.org

Nina Shapiro: Steering Committee Chair, PA Connection Newsletter Editor, Networking Group Liaison, Materials Committee Chair Pro Temp

Dada Maheshvarananda: Steering Committee Member, PRI Director

Mark Friedman: Steering Committee Secretary

John Linkhart: Finance Committee Member

Prakash Laufer: Steering Committee Member, Treasurer, Finance Committee Member

Nada Khader: Steering Committee Member, Outreach Committee Liaison

Alex Jackimovicz: Steering Committee Member, Deep Activism Leader and Liaison, Membership Committee Member

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Beth Wortzel, Chair

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Education Work Group: Mark Friedman, Liaison

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Deep Activism Work Group: Alex Jackimovicz, Liaison

alexjackimovicz@gmail.com

Outreach Committee: Nada Khader, Liaison

Networking Group: Nina Shapiro, Liaison



Recent photograph of Didi Devanistha and Prakash Laufer and their family