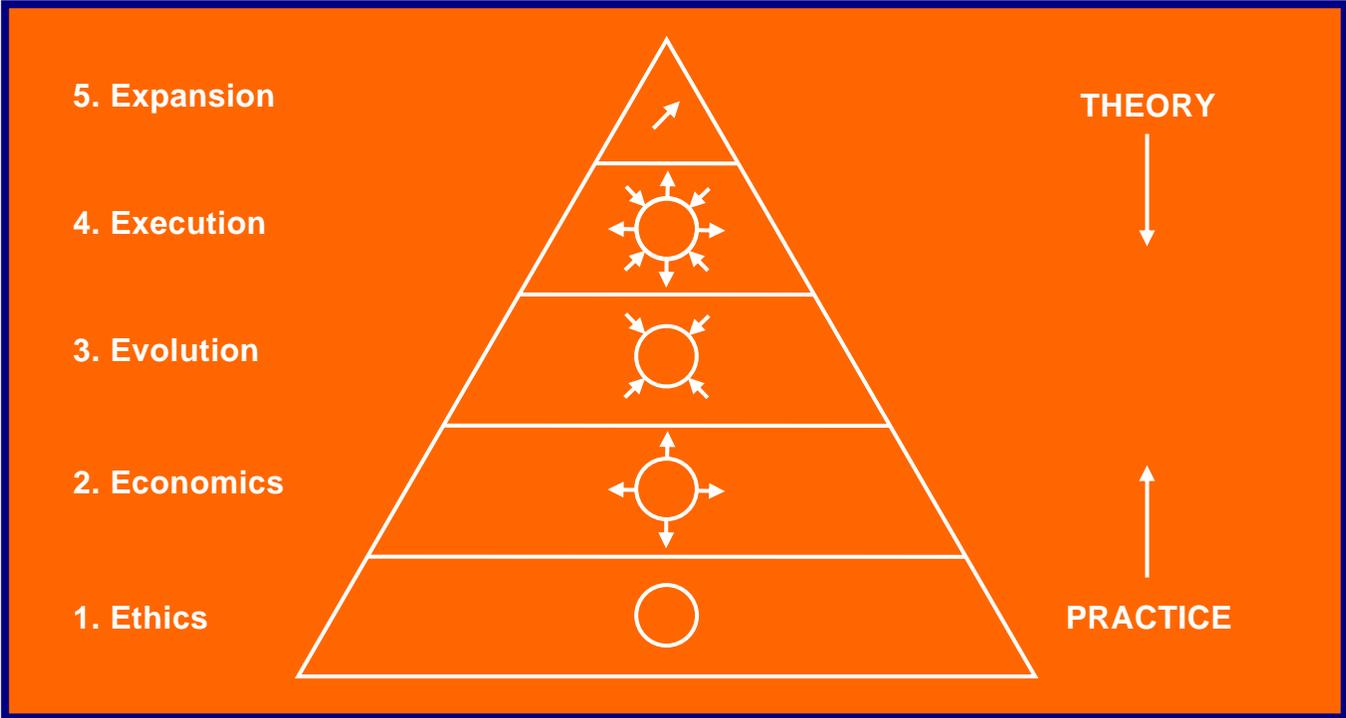


PROUT Social Analysis



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Dedicated – as always – to my spiritual master, Shrii Shrii Anandamurti

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Uniqueness of PROUT

The innate spirit of the word *society* is collective movement. The vital essence of society depends on two basic principles: (1) society's fundamental existence as a singular, inseparable entity (2) society's inevitable, inherent dynamism. Within the ambit of society, countless individual organisms pursue their personal lives; but ultimately each is inextricably related to the whole of society – none can remain totally aloof from the rest.

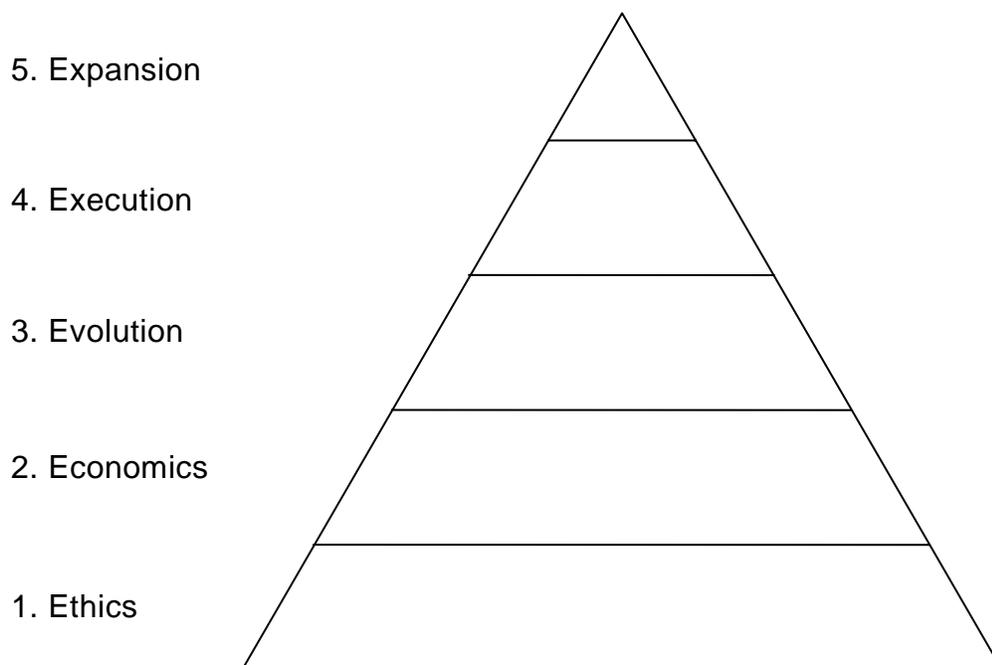
Where the nature of isolated living does not vitiate the progressive movement of corporate life, there – in that united advancement of all individual beings – lies society's genetic potentiality to be sublime.

None of the past social and economic theories have taken the view that the human race is an integral and indivisible entity. Neither capitalism nor communism proclaims this fundamental truth. With their biased dogmas, they can never bring peace to this troubled planet. Hence, there is still so much infighting and intolerance among human beings. This is the seed cause of war, the darkest blemish on our collective conscience. But PROUT is unique. PROUT can put an end to intolerance and war, because PROUT's practical guidance is founded on a synthetic approach, activated by universal love.

The Social Pyramid

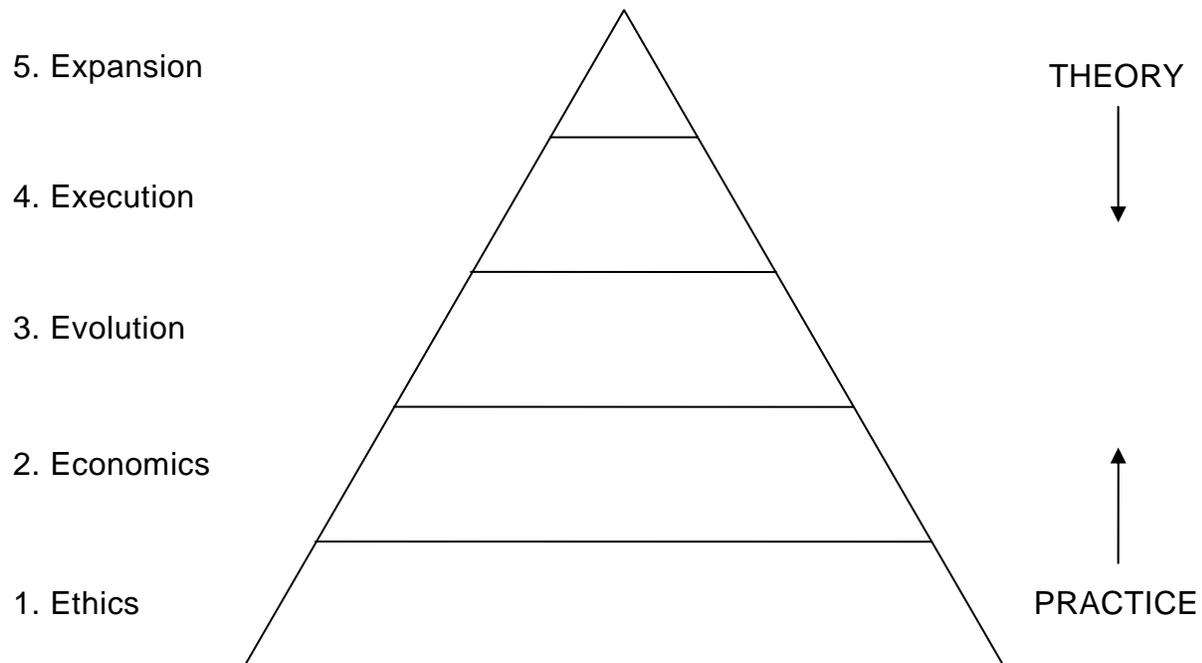
According to PROUT, all social concerns can be conceptualized in a five layered, pyramidal model. At the base are all matters concerned with ethics and maintenance of social integrity. On the second level we find economics. The third level deals with fulfillment of the evolutionary potential of the individuals and collectivities. The fourth level takes up the executive problems of setting priorities and sorting out conflict of interests. And the fifth level consists of a specific and general overview with a mind to the short- and long-term expansion of society in all respects.

Figure 1 Layers of the Social Pyramid



This pyramidal model applies for any society from the smallest family to the largest community, from the most primitive tribe to the highest civilization. Each and every aspect of society's operations may be located on one or another level of this pyramid. For example, legislation and judicial matters are on the first level, agricultural and industrial affairs are on the second level, education and welfare are on the third level, administration and politics are on the fourth level, and research and city planning are on the fifth level.

Of course, this model (without any values plugged in) is little more than a tool for studying and compartmentalizing the various necessary operations of society. Nevertheless, it becomes particularly valuable when we note the practical and theoretical relationships between the different layers of the pyramid. From bottom to top is a *practical* flow, each level being firmly constructed on the foundation provided by the lower levels. From top to bottom is a *theoretical* flow, with actions and decisions taken on any level materially affecting the work done on all lower levels.

Figure 2 Theory and Practice

In other words, we can say that any particular level has a direct (theoretical) effect upon any and all lower levels; and similarly any particular level has an indirect (practical) effect upon any and all higher levels. Furthermore, it is important to remember that this is a dynamic model with upwards and downwards movements operating continuously. None can stop society's perpetual motion – a change in practice indirectly affects theory, which again directly affects practice once more.

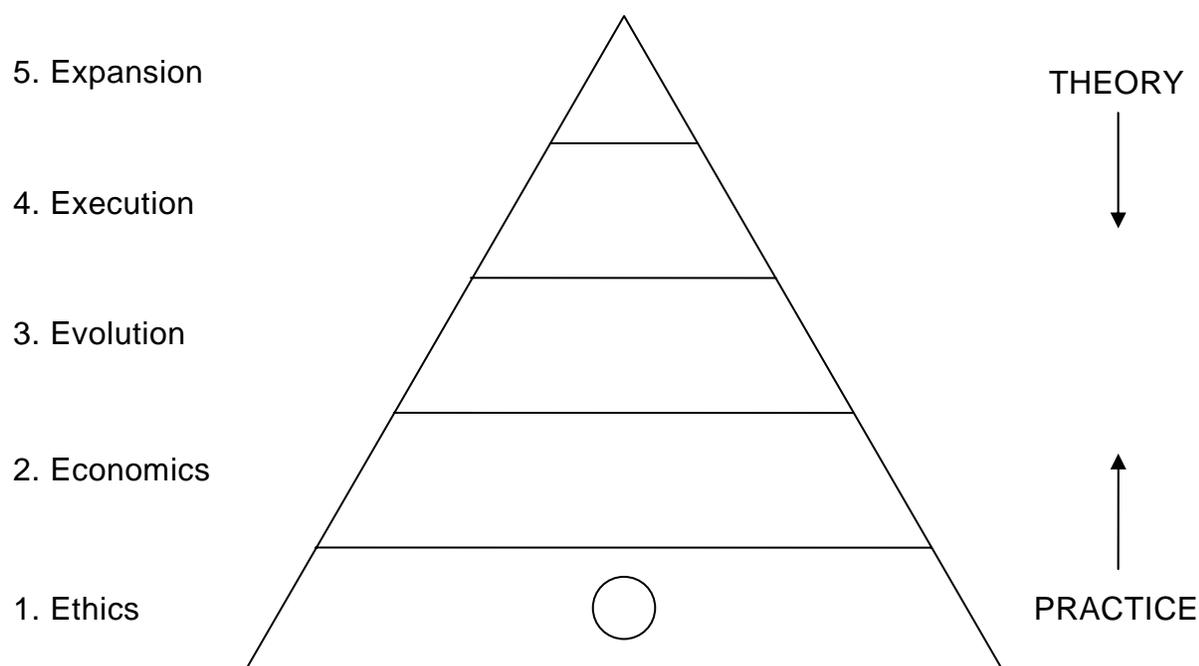
To give a brief example of how this pyramid works, let us take the first two levels – ethics and economics. Imagine a household of five with a limited supply of hot water such that during winter only one or two persons can conveniently take a bath before the hot water runs out. This household faces two interrelated problems: 1) how to allocate the limited supply of hot water 2) how to control the consumption of hot water so that it can be distributed in the chosen manner. The first problem may be seen as an economic problem, whereas the second problem is essentially ethical in nature. The decision as to who will be allowed to take a bath with the hot water is essentially economic in nature – it may or may not be made in accordance with moral, or even ethical, considerations (though of course it is typically desirable that it should be). However, before any distribution of the hot water can be safely carried out, some steps must be taken to ensure that none of the household members unlawfully take hot water that is intended for the use of someone else. The passing of suitable rules and regulations with regard to the use of hot water represents the problem of ethics. So then if we now examine the interrelationship between the economic problem and the ethical one, we note the following points. The economic situation and the decisions taken with respect to it directly affect the theoretical solution to the ethical problem; that is, the decisions taken in the ethical realm must be appropriate to the economic situation. On the other hand, it is impossible to ensure the successful performance of any economic policy without first establishing a supportive foundation of ethical policies. (Here it should be understood that ethics are often based more on pragmatism than moralism.) Thus the ethical policies form a practical foundation for the economic policies. The ethical policies also indirectly affect the economic policies by fixing a set of parameters within which the economic policies may be effectively carried out.

It is important to understand correctly the pyramidal flow. One may conceive of it as a subtle stream of nectar flowing downwards and a foundation of bricks being built upwards. The higher levels determine the manner whereby the lower levels will be performed, whereas the lower levels make possible the implementation of the higher levels. In human terms, we may take the analogy of body and mind. The body provides a suitable base through which the mind can operate whereas the mind actually controls and even molds the body per its will. Similarly, according to this pyramidal model, a particular level of society acts as a *body* or portion of a body for any and all higher levels and acts as a *mind* or portion of a mind for any and all lower levels. With this understanding, we may say that it is the downwards flow of the pyramid that is ultimately the most significant in PROUT's social model. Human existence is more an ideological flow than a physical one. In this point of view, PROUT differs from the materialist philosophers and most Marxian theoreticians, who perceive mind as nothing more than a chemical reaction in matter and the actions of mind as being wholly the product of environmental factors. According to PROUT, there is some interrelationship between mind and matter, but mind is the greater of the two and definitely the dominant factor.

The Five E's

A complete social theory must offer practical guidance on all five levels of the social pyramid. Therefore PROUT has five fundamental principles, one to guide policy formation on each level. A brief analysis of these five fundamental principles will serve here the dual purpose of further clarifying the social model as well as defining many of the essential concepts of PROUT.

Figure 3 Ethics

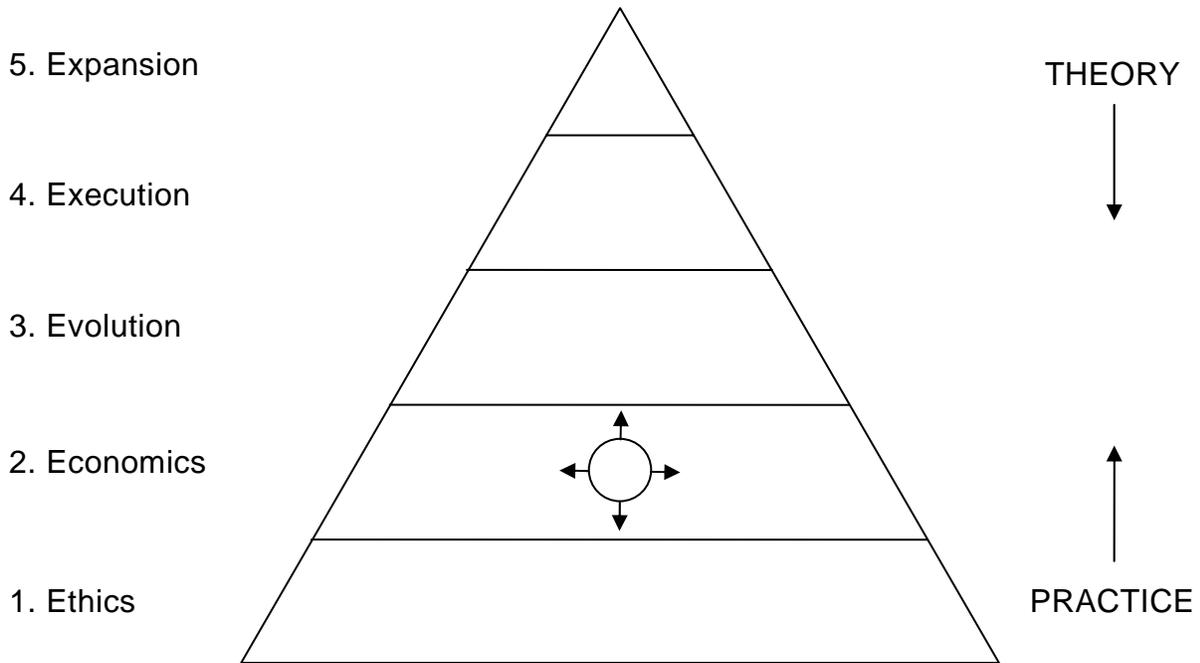


As aforementioned, the first level of our social model is ethics. Social ethics is concerned with preventing actions that may be deemed anti-social. According to PROUT's first fundamental principle:

The universe is the joint property of all. All have the usufructuary right, i.e. the right of enjoyment, but none have the right to abuse. If anybody gathers much wealth and hoards it, s/he directly curtails the happiness and convenience of others in the society. His/her behavior is flagrantly anti-social. Therefore, none should be allowed to hoard wealth without the per-mission of society.¹

¹ Shrii Shrii Anandamurti (a.k.a. P. R. Sarkar); *Ananda Sutram*; Chapter 5 Sutra 13

Figure 4 Economics



As a direct result of social control over maximum accumulation of wealth by individuals (or groups of individuals), PROUT is able to take effective economic measures that maximize productivity and ensure a just distribution of society's aggregate wealth. And so the second fundamental principle of PROUT is objective in nature. It is a pragmatic principle that guides society's efforts for material development or expansion as contrasted to society's efforts for self improvement, which is a subjective endeavor. To clarify this objective-subjective distinction, let us digress slightly to a simple analysis of the manifest universe.

Figure 5 Perspectives – Objective and Subjective

Causal						
Subtle						
Crude						
Objective Subjective	Physical Individual Collective		Mental Individual Collective		Spiritual Individual Collective	

From an objective point of view, PROUT conceives of this universe divided into three realms – crude, subtle, and causal. The crude realm is that which is matter and matter-related. The subtle realm comprises the functions of mind such as contemplation and memory and thus includes for example the wealth of factual or scientific data available to humanity. Finally, the causal realm is concerned with the higher levels of mind, which encompass all of the uplifting ideals that inspire human beings. Thus the entire universe can be broken down into these three objective categories.

On the other hand, the universe can also be broken down subjectively. A subjective analysis is concerned with the living organisms as individual or collective entities. All organisms (including the so-called *inanimate objects*) have a trifarious personality composed of body, mind, and spirit. (Of course, the individual mind and spirit of inanimate objects is, generally speaking, more of a latent potentiality than a concrete reality). These three subjective attributes correlate directly with the crude, subtle, and causal realms. Thus the aggregate universe can alternately be described as either the combination of the crude, subtle and causal realms or as the sum total of all individual and collective physical, mental, and spiritual strata. It simply depends on whether your viewpoint is objective or subjective.

As the second fundamental principle is economic in nature and essentially objective, it must to some degree view even the human beings in terms of their crude (physical), subtle (mental), and causal (spiritual) capacities, which in themselves are valuable assets to society. Thus according to PROUT:

Whatever wealth and resources are inherent in the crude, subtle and causal worlds should be used and developed for the benevolence of the units.²

On one hand, society must be diligent in producing goods for a healthy economy. On the other hand, society must always recall that the purpose of that production is ultimately to benefit all of the individuals in society. Production and distribution are the two aspects of economy. Both are vitally important; but, of the two, distribution is of greater significance. Hence:

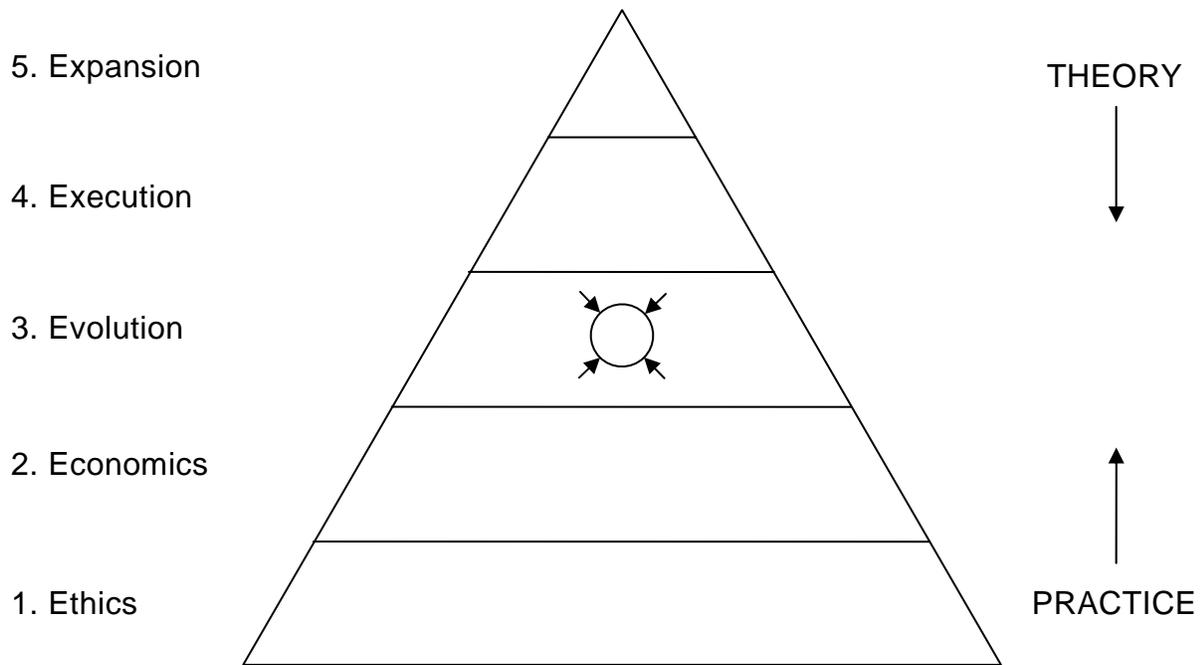
The accumulated wealth of society should be reasonably distributed with due judgement and deliberation.³

In a nutshell the second fundamental principle proposes that there be maximum utilization and rational distribution of the crude, subtle, and causal resources.

² Ibid, Chapter 5 Sutra 14

³ Ibid

Figure 6 Evolution

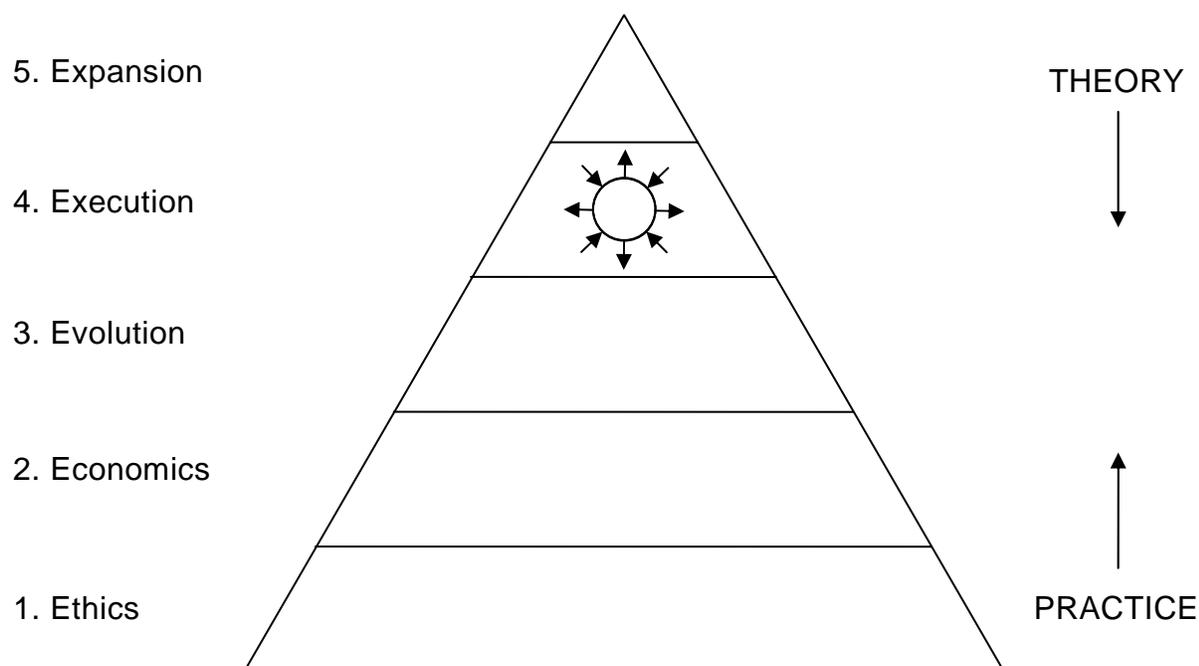


After meeting the *objective* needs of society, it becomes feasible then to see to the *subjective* development of society. Economics must precede evolutionary considerations, because the problems of survival will generally preoccupy a person's mind until sufficiently overcome. But life is dynamic, and all living beings have an innate urge to grow. So, while improving the economy is a natural and necessary concern, it must be guided by a still more fundamental concern, which is the development of the individuals within the society. Hence the third fundamental principle of PROUT relates to the subjective development of society, or *evolution*. According to this third principle, there should be maximum utilization of the physical, mental, and spiritual potentialities of the individuals and the collectivities. Shrii P. R. Sarkar, the propounder of PROUT, has said:

The development of collective body, collective mind, and collective spiritual bearing has got to be effected. One must not forget that collective good lies in individualities, and individual good lies in collectivity... The body, mind, and self of every individual have the potentials of limitless expansion and development. That potentiality has got to be harnessed and brought to fruition.⁴

⁴ Ibid, Chapter 5 Sutra 15

Figure 7 Execution



At this point in our social analysis, the problem of administration arises. Society must find the best way to execute its responsibilities in light of the various complex issues, having many possible approaches with various advantages and disadvantages. With this understanding, PROUT's fourth fundamental principle proclaims that there should be a proper adjustment among the crude, subtle, and causal utilizations. (Here it should be recalled that when considering the living beings, *crude*, *subtle*, and *causal* become synonymous with *physical*, *mental*, and *spiritual*.)

In the sincere effort for individual and collective benevolence, one has got to work in such a way that a proper parallelism and concord may be maintained among the three crude, subtle, and causal factors as well as physical, mental, and spiritual ones. For example, the society stands committed to satisfy the minimum necessities of every individual; but if society, goaded by the impulse of this responsibility, makes provision for the dispatch of food to every house and builds a house apiece for everyone, then the individual endeavor and activity will ebb and get retarded. The human beings will gradually become lazy. Therefore, the society has just to make provision so that s/he, in exchange for his/her labor as per capacity, may earn the requisite money needed for his/her minimum necessities. And, in order to raise the standard of minimum necessities of a person, the best thing for society to do will be to enhance his/her buying capacity.⁵

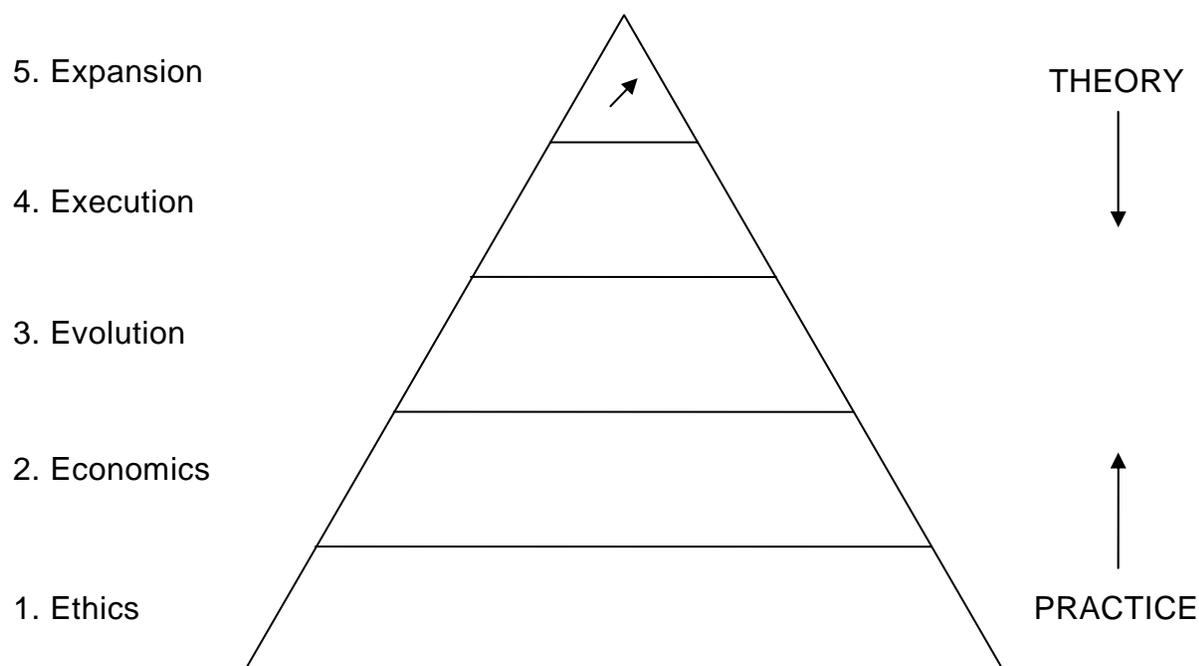
⁵ Ibid, Chapter 5 Sutra 16

When applied to the problem of what type of work to take from a human being, this principle extends to the arenas of government and social control. The reasoning is not difficult to comprehend. Consider the following:

While taking service from a man who is physically, mentally, and spiritually developed, the society shall follow a well-balanced policy of equity and fair play. If only one of the three endowments – physical, mental, or spiritual – be found developed and manifest in a man, the society shall take such service from him as is suitable to that particular endowment or aptitude. If two endowments, viz. physical and intellectual, are found sufficiently in a man, the society shall follow a well-balanced policy by taking from him intellectual service in greater measure and physical service only sparingly; for intellectual power is comparatively subtle and rare. If all the three endowments are found in one man, the society shall make greatest use of his spiritual services, less use of his intellectual services, and still less use of his physical ones. Those that have spiritual power are capable of doing the greatest service to the cause of the society. Next in order that can be of service to society are those that have intellectual power. Those that have only physical strength, though not unimportant, cannot do anything by themselves. They toil at the instance of those that are endowed with spiritual and intellectual powers. Hence social control should not be in the hands of those that are only brawny, nor those that are only brave, nor those that are only brainy or intelligent, nor those that are only worldly wise; but it should be in the hands of those that are spiritual aspirants, intelligent as well as brave.⁶

⁶ Ibid

Figure 8 Expansion



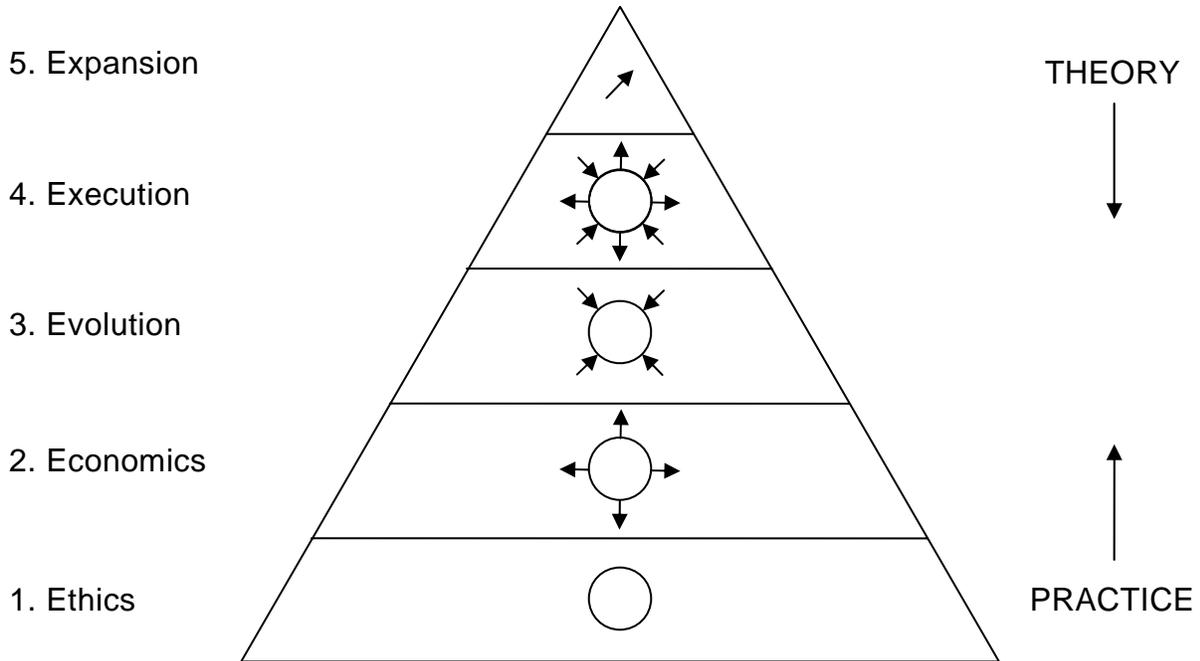
Finally an overview and a direction are required. Society cannot be administered on a day-to-day basis, nor can the same policies be applied in every place. Hence, the highest level of our social pyramid consists of those concepts of expansion through struggle and through scientific research that become most practicable only after building an almost complete social network – those concepts that will permeate the entire network with a clear guiding philosophy. To fulfill these most crucial demands, PROUT's fifth fundamental principle asserts that utilizations vary in accordance with changes in time, space, and form; and, consequently, utilizations should always be of a progressive nature. According to PROUT:

Changes in the use of things must come as per time, place, and person – a fact that must be recognized; and recognizing this fact one has to be progressive in the practical use of every object, every idea... The small or big snags and obstacles that may crop up and stand in the way of society as the result of the use of developed tools and apparatuses, ingredients and materials, evolved through dynamic ideation and progressive imagination, must be faced courageously. Through fights and clashes [society] must march on to victory – to the path of vindication of universalism, the cherished goal of life.⁷

⁷ Ibid, Chapter 5 Sutra 17

Conclusion

Figure 9 The Social Pyramid (Complete)



Knowingly or unknowingly every sincere revolutionary soldier, every humanitarian activist, every lover of humanity, wants to establish PROUT. Moreover, the eventual materialization of PROUT's ideals is a certainty. When an apple is tossed into the air, it will fall down to earth – the theory of gravity will succeed. Similarly, PROUT, because it is benevolent and because it is practical, must some day be appreciated by humanity. Once understood and accepted by humanity, PROUT will surely guide all social activity on this planet thereafter.

In the course of this very brief article, a complex model has been, at best, sketchily outlined. To do justice to this model, and to the principles of PROUT, both should be studied in greater depth. Nevertheless, no matter how complex society may be and consequently no matter how refined and subtle our understanding of PROUT must be, the essence of PROUT can be grasped without difficulty by everyone. That essence is summed up in a single sentence. In the words of Shrii P. R. Sarkar, the propounder of PROUT and the greatest humanitarian philosopher in Earth's history:

This is a Progressive Utilization Theory, published for the good and happiness of all.⁸

⁸ Ibid, Chapter 5 Sutra last (unnumbered)