

Identifying Most Significant Indicators of Progress

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Theme: [Poverty & Social Inequality](#)

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Identification of most significant indicators of progress is essential for any country or society, and this should be seen as only a first step towards having the willingness and the ability to examine the state of the society in an unbiased way from the perspective of these indicators.

The first indicator is in terms of meeting basic needs of any people including access to adequate, **satisfactory and safe food to meet nutrition and health needs, access to safe water, access to housing that meets all essential requirements of daily life including protection from weather extremes, rest, cooking, sanitation etc. and access to clothes that protect in a dignified way.**

All people should have access to basic medicines and health care, as well to at least high school education with opportunities open for various kinds of education in later life too, with education seen more as a continuum in life and as a means also of achieving ethical and socially responsible life.

Secondly, in order to access basic needs for themselves and their families, **people should have access to livelihoods that are more or less satisfactory, creative, non-exploitative and do not involve serious health hazards, risks, stress or any element of bonded labor or slavery-like feeling.**

There should be a daily time limit of about 8 hours, access to around 100 paid holidays in a year, provision of adequate compensation for occupational injury/disease and for at least some limited pensions for all people after age 60 and opportunities and freedom to take a break without sacrificing pension or related interests. Earnings should be adequate to meet basic needs.

Thirdly, there should be **adequate democratic space for everyone, including adequate freedom of expression** (as long as this does not insult others). At the level of family, school, college, workplace, village, city and nation, people including children should be able to experience democratic freedom and space.

Fourth. The dignity of all people should be respected, and there should be no discrimination at all on the basis of gender, race, class, caste, color, ethnicity, religion, sect, nationality and other identities, with equal respect for all human beings. However the space for affirmative, supporting actions for those who have suffered historical injustice should remain till such time that this injustice has not been corrected.

Fifth, there should be overall feeling of well-being in society, supported by goodness and stability of close social relationships. There should be high levels of cooperation and helping each other in difficult times, and social stability based on this.

Sixth, there should be a strong commitment to protection of environment and sustainability. The next generation should inherit a safe world in terms of protection of environment, protection from disasters and also social stability.

Seventh, society and economy should be basically non-exploitative and people should not experience any burden of exploitation at social and economic levels. Excessive, non-sustainable, harmful exploitation of natural resources and nature should be avoided.

Eighth, there should be compassion and protective attitudes towards all other forms of life while any cruel practices should be avoided as much as possible.

Ninth, these should be a commitment to peace and non-violence at all levels, whether family, community, workplace, village or city or in international relations.

Last but not the least, a country should have relations of cooperation and not exploitation, peace and not aggression or war, towards all other countries. In several contexts, this may turn out to be of the most crucial importance.

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