

## Plenary Keynote Speech II

Aditya Mukherjee

### *The Transformation of the Indian Economy in the Contemporary Period: From the Colonial to the Post-Colonial*

#### Abstract

- I shall question two very divergent perspectives on the Transition from the colonial to the post-colonial situation in India.
- First, the neo-colonial position that colonialism led to economic development and prepared the ground for the rapid post colonial development seen in India in recent years and other post colonial countries of East and South-east Asia.
- Second, the orthodox Left view that correctly does not see colonialism playing any positive role in the development of the colony. However, it denies the possibility of any transition to independent development in the colony even after independence unless the colonial economy 'shoots out' of the capitalist world system into socialism. The Dependency School reiterates this view.
- I shall argue that both these positions are incorrect.
- I shall provide contrasting data between colonial and post-colonial development in India which suggest that it is the *breaks* rather than the *continuity* with colonialism that made it possible.
- The post-colonial developments in India also belie, in my opinion, the orthodox Left view that it was leading to further neo-colonial or dependent development rather than independent development, because India remained within the world capitalist system.
- While the post-colonial situation in the colony definitely marks significant breaks in the economic sphere the continuities with colonialism remain in the area of social divisions promoted during the colonial period and in the persistence of the colonial mindset, particularly in the intellectual domain.

