



## **Colloquium: The Making of the Indian Entrepreneurial Class**

Speaker:

Raman Mahadevan, Independent Researcher and Economic Historian based in Chennai

Date / Time:

January 17, 2013 - 3:45pm - 5:30pm

Venue:

10th Floor, Auditorium, Pixel A, APU

Abstract:

The question of the evolution of an entrepreneurial class remains critically important, then as now, to our quest for understanding the nature of the state and society in the making. Though numerically marginal, the capitalist class the world over, by virtue of the sheer weight and power of the wealth it commands in market-driven societies, has played a powerful role in shaping state policy. However the Indian situation, as is increasingly being recognized now, was unique in many respects. Unlike most other Third-World dependent economies, with a history of imperial rule, India was probably the only one which spawned a well-developed entrepreneurial class whose growth and evolution was shaped both by the process of colonial commercialization and the prevailing social structure that enabled those from distinct mercantile communities and castes to seize the opportunities for wealth generation. However given the sheer the diversity of the socio economic structure in colonial India, the accumulation process and the sources of entrepreneurship were not uniformly similar across regions. My talk delineates the institutional forces underlying the making of an entrepreneurial class in colonial India.

A Note on the Speaker:

Raman Mahadevan is an economic and business historian based in Chennai. He has been faculty and researcher in various universities and other research institutions. He has made significant scholarly contributions to research on modern South Asia, especially in the area of industrial and capitalist development in colonial South India. He has several publications to his credit, including *Fortune Seekers: The Journeys of the Nattukottai Chettiars*, Penguin Books India (forthcoming, 2013). He has co-edited *Shaping India: Economic Change in Historical Perspective* (Routledge India, Delhi, 2011).