

India Awakes

Saturday, 20 February 2016

- Host: Barun Mitra, Liberty Institute, India,
with Tom G Palmer, Altas Network, USA

The second day of ALF 2016 began with a screening of India Awakes; a documentary produced by the Free to Choose Network. The 50 minute show depicted the marginalised groups in India that have reaped the benefits of market reforms that the Indian government undertook in the early 1990's.

Following the screening, Barun Mitra and Tom Palmer discussed its content and themes. Mr Barun pointed out that the boom in India's economy since the turn of the century was a result of the productive forces which were unleashed by the invisible hand of the market. Under the previous economic system, which was largely state directed and planned, individual entrepreneurship was largely stymied. This resulted in poverty and destitution for large segments of the Indian population.

Tom Palmer opined that classical liberal think tanks have to be ready for when a crisis emerges - like the Indian economic crisis in 1991 - for governments tend to become desperate for alternative policy recommendations at such points.

Mr Palmer also spoke about the dignity that was possessed by individuals in marginalised communities. He argued that if the institutions are sound and the incentives are right, those who suffer from poverty can and will improve their livelihoods independently, without having to depend on the government.