

Tracing Indological Exploration of Indian History & Scholastic Contributions of East India Company Indologists – Remembering the Monumental Services of Surveyor Colin Mackenzie

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Abstract -- This paper traces the services of Colin Mackenzie towards exploring the roots of Indian history through collection of historical resources. It is said he travelled nearly 60 thousand miles across all parts of Indian to collect rarest of the historical artefacts and documents. His methodology of historical exploration through resources available around the region influenced host of East India company officials to take up the studies of Indian history. The study of epigraphs, study of numismatics, manuscripts, monuments etc was. Numerous scholastic institutions were established to take up archaeological studies. The Indian history became the favourite subject of study in prestigious educational Institutions of Calcutta, Bombay and Madras. Colin Mackenzie was oriented to take up the survey of Mysore territory following the incessant wars of East India Company with regional king Tipu Sultan. The surveys he undertook along with his assistants proved fruitful as the East India Company could depose Tipu sultan and establish Company rule in Mysore territory. Colin Mackenzie was supported in his scholastic endeavours by the most efficient Brahmin brothers from Kavali including Lakshmaiah, Boraiah and Venkatalakshmaiah. The survey of the Mysore region and South India lead to exploration of precious artefacts and this was documented for further research by other East India Company sponsored pedagogic anthology. The influence of Colin Mackenzie paved way for furthering historical research and establishment of museum across India.

Indexed Terms: Colin Mackenzie, historical research, efforts of East India Company, influence of resources documentation

I. INTRODUCTION

Colin Mackenzie occupies a very significant position in the annals of the History of South India through his voluminous survey activities. The monumental work carried out by Mackenzie was documented by Howes, Jennifer (2010). Illustrating India: The Early

Colonial Investigations of Colin Mackenzie (1784–1821). New Delhi: Oxford University Press & Mantena, Rama Sundari (2012) The origins of modern historiography in India. Antiquarianism and Philology, 1780-1880. (Palgrave Macmillan). These compilations were supportive for focusing on the origins of modern historiography.

II. COLIN MACKENZIE – EARLY LIFE

Colin Mackenzie was born in 1754 to an eminent Stornoway family. His father was a merchant by name Murdoch Mackenzie. He was the town's first Postmaster and a founder member of Lodge Fortrose in Stornoway. His early life was very joyful and he spent his time observing his father work as a post master. Colin Mackenzie lived up to his family's expectation, pursuing a distinguished military career and later becoming Surveyor-General of British India and earning a place in history as one of its greatest historical explorers and archivists.

III. INFLUENCE OF TEACHER ALEXANDER ANDERSON

Colin Mackenzie was given education through Alexander Anderson who was a reputed tutor of science and mathematics subjects. This tutor was so inspirational to Colin Mackenzie that he received greater impetus for archival studies. Alexander Mackenzie, who himself was a great explorers influenced Colin Mackenzie & this was the significant factor in Colin Mackenzie primarily a military man was attracted towards historical studies

and archaeological exploration. Thus the seeds of explorative attitude, passion for discovery and acquisition of historical knowledge in Colin Mackenzie were a natural corollary of his academic masters.

IV. COLIN MACKENZIE

In his early twenties, Colin Mackenzie was employed as an Inspector of Customs in Stornoway. In 1782, he began work with Lord Napier of Merchiston who was, at that time, engaged in preparing a biography of his distinguished ancestor, John Napier, the inventor of logarithms. This placement offered to him his first taste of Eastern culture, researching Indian mathematics and the Hindu system of logarithms, and provided him with the experience and qualifications he would need for his next role. Colin Mackenzie joined the East India Company when he was 28 years and by 1783, Colin Mackenzie was in India to explore archaeological chronology. He spent the rest of his life in India collecting thousands of manuscripts, historical artefacts, archaeological items, coins, relics, monumental remains.

Colin Mackenzie started as an Ensign of Engineers and later being promoted to Lieutenant, before finishing up as Colonel in 1819. His abilities as both an engineer and a soldier were widely recognised and he is affectionately described in the history books as 'the man who mapped India'. Colin Mackenzie focused his attention to his true passion search for the resources of ancient history and artefacts of India. Manuscripts, books, coins, idols, images, carved stonework and other works of art were collected and studied to gain greater insights into the Eastern mind. The significance of his work was described in one statement "our knowledge of the literature and early history of Southern India is almost entirely due to the Mackenzie manuscripts".

V. COLIN MACKENZIE AS SURVEYOR GENERAL OF INDIA

The beginnings of historical research through survey was conceived under Governor of Bengal, In 1757 he appointed James Renell as survey officer for Bengal

province. The significance resources collected by him lead way to knowing the geographical exploration of inner regions of Bengal and this was fruitful for East India officials in devouring the local chiefs and establishing the Company rural across the remote regions of Bengal Province. Following this, Colin Mackenzie was appointed Surveyor General of Madras Presidency in 1810. After his returning to India, in June 1815, he was invested with responsibility as he continued survey of eastern parts of India ranging from the Krishna to Cape Comorin.

VI. COLIN MACKENZIE & HIS ASSISTANTS

Colin Mackenzie appointed Benjamin Swain Ward (1786-1835) to survey the regions of Tamilnad specially Travancore region, lieutenant Peter Eyre Conner for Coorg Francis Mountford to survey the regions of Guntur, James Garling to survey the territories of Nizam of Hyderabad. By 1816, Garling had used a triangulation system similar to that of Lambton to work out the position of the ruins of Bijapur and was moving northwards. While Garling's work was appreciated by the surveyors of Bombay, he was reprimanded by Colin Mackenzie whose orders restricted him to the Nizam's territory.

VII. COLIN MACKENZIE DEATH & CONSERVATION OF HIS INVALUABLE COLLECTIONS

After Colin Mackenzie's death, his priceless collection was sent to London. His wife was given royalty money of one lakh and later it was shipped to London. All his invaluable collections still accessible for researchers in premier the British Museum and the British Library. Colin Mackenzie survived by thousands of considerable corpus of native materials which is still studied and valued today is always considered as the man who mapped India. History of Southern India owes gratitude to Colin Mackenzie whose historical resources collection brought to light several forgotten dynasties who ruled southern India.

VIII. SIGNIFICANCE OF KAIFIYATS

'kaifiyats' collected by Colonel Collins Mackenzie between 1799-1821 in South India. The concept and implementation of what is called *KERE-DHARMA* have been widely recorded not only in Kannada 'kaifiyats' but also in epigraphs of this region. But there is an important difference between these two types of sources. As legal records inscriptions of south India are very brief in their references. On the other hand Kannada 'kaifiyats' are more descriptive in character. They throw light on the inner working of the rural system of pre-colonial Karnataka.

IX. CONCLUSION

Colin Mackenzie was a great collector of antiquities as he surveyed southern India through rarest drawings and mapping. He was supportive in his scholastic pursuits by local interpreters and scholars. He brought about a tremendous inclination to study traditional religious practices, oral histories, inscriptions and other evidence initially out of personal interest and later as a surveyor General of India. His collections consisting of thousands of manuscripts, inscriptions, translations, coins and paintings were acquired after his death by the India Office Library and are an important source for the study of Indian history. The need for conserving his collections becomes more necessary because the volume of historical documents collected by name surpasses any other surveyors collections in the entire world.

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