

Sampigehalli Survey Tower: A Legacy of Exploration



Standing tall for over 220 years, the Sampigehalli Auxiliary Tower Station is a silent witness to one of the greatest scientific projects in history—the Great Trigonometrical Survey (GTS) of India. This survey, which began in 1802, aimed to measure the exact shape of the Earth and map the vast Indian subcontinent. It was this effort that ultimately led to the calculation of Mount Everest's height, confirming it as the tallest peak in the world.

The Survey that Measured India

Initiated by Lt. Col. William Lambton, the survey started from Hennur-Bagalur and stretched toward what is now Ramana Maharshi Park near Mekhri Circle. Using precise mathematical techniques, the project measured the heights of 79 Himalayan peaks, including Everest, K2, and Kanchenjunga. It also mapped critical regions like the Cauvery Delta, the Mysore region, and the Great Indian Arc, extending from the southern tip of India to the Himalayas.

After Lambton's passing, George Everest took over the survey, further refining its accuracy. Later, Andrew Scott Waugh confirmed Everest's status as the world's tallest mountain in 1865, naming it after his predecessor. The final measurements were completed in 1871 by James Walker.

A Rare Heritage Structure

The Sampigehalli Survey Tower, built in 1803, is one of the few remaining structures from this historic project. Originally, a 12-foot pillar stood in the center of the platform, aiding in the survey. While the pillar is now gone, the deep, circular pit at its base remains. This tower, along with another at Nagawara, is among the last few GTS heritage structures left in the country.

Preserving History

Perched on a hillock near Venkateshpura Lake, the Sampigehalli Survey Tower has faced threats from urban development and quarrying. However, local communities have worked tirelessly to protect this piece of history. It stands today as a reminder of India's scientific achievements and the efforts to preserve its heritage.

To learn more about the Sampigehalli Survey Tower, scan the QR code and explore its remarkable history.

Did You Know?

- The Great Trigonometrical Survey helped determine the exact curvature of the Earth.
- Measurements taken from India played a role in refining global mapping techniques.
- This project was one of the earliest large-scale scientific mapping efforts in the world.

References

- [Deccan Herald: 220-yr-old structure under threat](#)
- [Citizen Matters: Venkateshpura Lake and Sampigehalli Monument](#)
- [Madras Courier: The Great Trigonometrical Survey of India](#)
- [Geospatial World: The Great Trigonometrical Survey of India](#)
- [YouTube: History of the Great Trigonometrical Survey](#)