

Our **Building** and **Construction**

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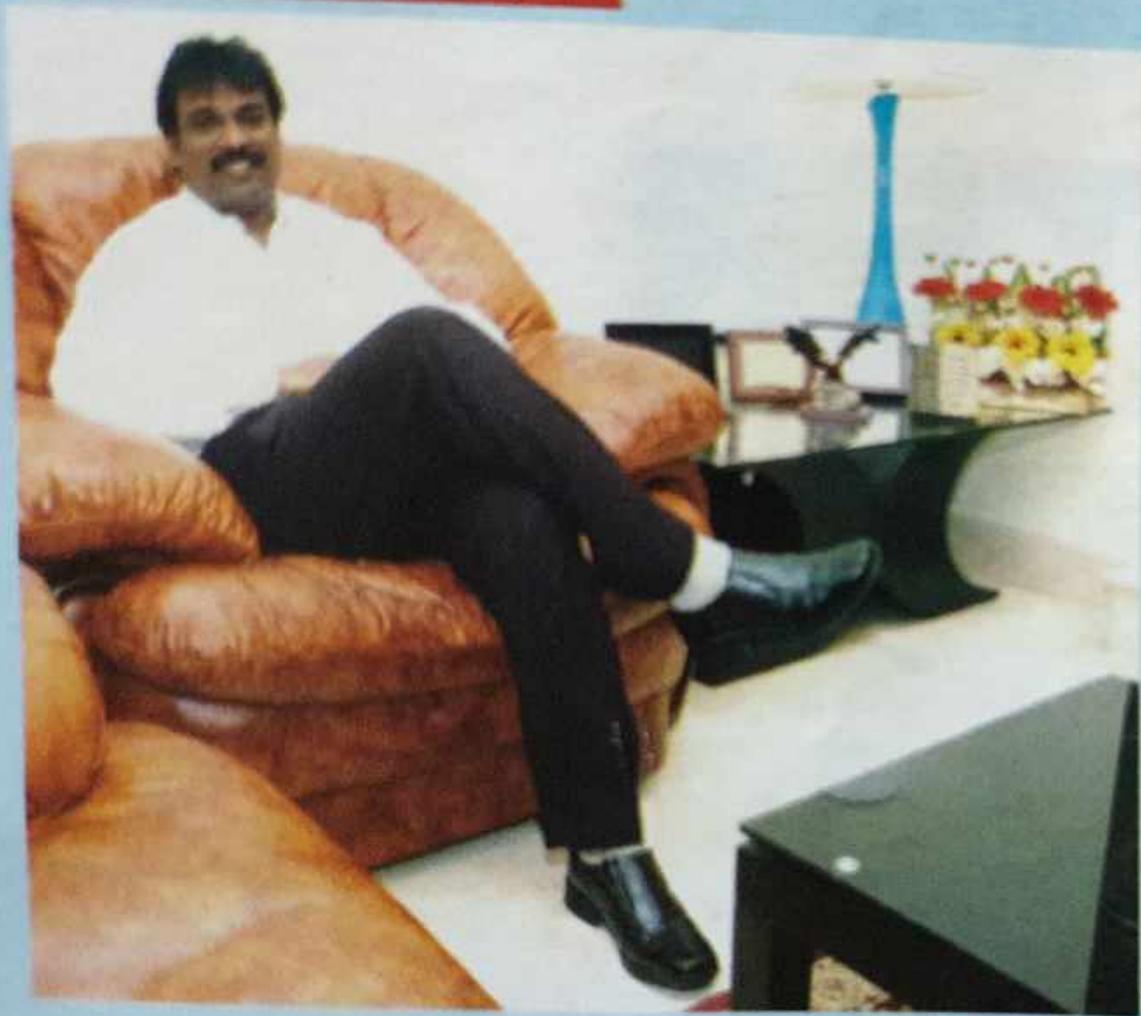
**REALTY**  
**Shooting up!**  
Once again...

**FREE - 2 Plans**

**Lower Margin**  
**Larger Market**

'A Protagonist of Civil Engineering' **Mr. M. Anto George**, Managing Director,  
Cornerstone Constructions Private Limited.

**Inside**



**6**

**Lower  
Margin  
Larger  
Market**



# Lower Margin Larger Market

'A Protagonist of Civil Engineering' **Mr. M. Anto George**, Managing Director, Cornerstone Constructions Private Limited.

**H**ere is a man who sings Ode to Civil Engineering. Being himself a civil engineer and having established a name for himself in the field of construction, his words command consideration by everyone concerned. He is another living example for many a young aspirants desirous of coming up in life.

He has not only lofty ideas but worthy suggestions as well which he has gracefully consented to share with us, here.

So, let's listen to Mr. M. Anto George who will be talking about himself, his carrier, his experience, his methodology etc, etc...

After obtaining my Civil Engineering Degree in 1986, from the Coimbatore Institute of Technology, I had an opportunity of joining a leading consultancy firm in Chennai. In pursuit of experience and exposure in the field of construction, I joined another construction company and also pursued higher management studies. All these years, the idea of going on my own was always at the back of my mind.

Once I had the confidence of having enough exposure, I started my own firm "CORNERSTONE" in 1993.

My line of study and subsequently my profession have, all, been on my own choice. From the very beginning I was fascinated by the possibilities of Civil Engineering. And establishing a place for myself in the vast field of construction has always been my vision.

Since its inception in 1993, my company has enjoyed a balanced and sturdy growth till date. As in any other business we too have had problems to handle with. But that has not affected or rather was not allowed to affect our growth rate.

It's because we plan ahead meticulously and work judiciously to remain within the plan and never overshoot it.

Another important factor is my adamancy to stand on my own legs and not on borrowed ones.

I have never liked the idea of working with borrowed funds. In my opinion, borrowed funds create a false fund flow in your work environment and at the end of the day you would find yourself working not for your sake but only for your creditors. To the extent possible I never allow the luxury of doing business in credit.

Working with lowest possible margin is another major factor that adds stability to our growth rate. Lower your margin, larger will be your market. It is better that way than hiking up the margin and losing in the market.

I strongly believe that margin is to be earned and not fixed. I am proud to say that I have adopted this concept in all of my projects without exception.

hollow blocks-to paving blocks, you name anything; we have the facility/develop one to do it ourselves. Our employees are having multi skilled training experience. This helps us in saving cost in terms of man power and increase the possibility of additional margin as well. Thus we are able to keep our prices as low as possible and earn a margin too.

Our strategy 'expand, consolidate and expand' also greatly contribute to the stability of our growth. That is, we don't believe in blind expansion. After every expansion, we consolidate it and then move on to the next expansion. With that any possibility of unexpected future crashes is eliminated or averted.

Well, I think that is about the birth and growth history of 'Cornerstone.'

For all that big talk, what other huge projects you have handled so far and on hand now?

My first project was 'constructing a church.'



'How am I able to work with low margin in a market where prices of raw materials keep escalating?' wouldn't that be your logical question at this point?

Well, that has been made possible by our policy of self dependence. To say, we prepare all the materials that go into the execution of a project except of course the basic raw materials like aggregates, cement, steel etc. We have equipment to produce mostly everything we require for a project from bar cutting and bar bending, concrete batching to pumping, manufacturing shuttering materials,

I started with God and The Almighty God did the rest. In the course of my carrier I have designed and constructed many numbers of churches so far, besides other building projects. Church projects fascinate me and I love doing them.

We have executed many projects for Central Government and State Government Organizations, Public Sector undertakings, Educational Institutions, Private Industrial organizations etc.

Our major ongoing projects include the new complex for the Office of The Commissioner of Police, Chennai, coming up on a spiraling 5 1/2 acre land area at Vepery. It is a massive 10 storied complex, with all modern facilities, designed exclusively by The Tamil Nadu Police Housing Corporation Limited.

A modern eight storeyed building of the State Head Quarters for The Communist party of India coming up on South Boag Road, T. Nagar, Chennai is another prestigious project.

In almost every project possible, we try to bring the class of European Architecture into play. The new Corporate Office for Messrs. Aachi Masala designed by us is a classic example. Giving the building such a finish or doing it entirely in the European style is almost a passion or obsession for me so to say.

#### Ambition?

Our immediate ambition is to be among the TOP 10 construction companies of our nation, which we hope to achieve by the coming years.

And mechanizing the whole process of construction, develop methodologies to reduce construction costs and time is our constant goal.

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#### Future plan!

Yes, we have a long term future plan. As a service to the society, we have plans to manufacture and build prefabricated permanent houses on a mass scale using only localized materials and make it available at an affordable price band of just three lakhs rupees per house.

Once this plan materializes, it will make the dream of owning a house realizable for even the lowest income groups.

#### Recession?

You were asking about the impact of the recession. As far as I know it has not affected India as much as it has affected other parts of the world. Moreover India has always remained a stable market and enjoyed stable economy than any other country in the world.

The recession might have affected the real estate business a bit. That is a different line altogether. But it has not affected the construction industry as such. Being the provider of one of the three basic necessities of human life, it will go on without any serious setbacks. As a matter of fact this year we have more jobs on hand than the



same time around the previous year. This global phenomenon is real, but its impact on India and construction industry is a bit too hyped up beyond reality, I assume!

#### Advice to Students!

My advice to the student community is not to shun civil engineering by relegating it to the end of their list of preferences.

It is because of gross misconception about this faculty among the parents and students.

They have been lured by the false illusion of Information Technology and its related fields of study.

*‘Our strategy ‘expand, consolidate and expand’ also greatly contribute to the stability of our growth. That is, we don’t believe in blind expansion. After every expansion, we consolidate it and then move on to the next expansion.’*

And one keeps chasing this illusion without caring to know what civil engineering is all about and what it teaches.

It is the most fundamental of all other engineering disciplines. As everything goes onto the construction, it provides you the bird’s eye view of all other disciplines. A civil engineer will be more equipped to understand and monitor the work of his counterpart

from a different discipline than vice versa. Moreover, a civil engineer, unless he chooses to be so, will never be out of job. Somewhere or the other, his services may be needed, because it is the basics of all. Even to pursue your favorite IT, you need a structure and a college. And its emergence squarely depends on civil engineering.

Along with that, specialization in construction management, structural designing, soil Mechanics, town and country planning, hydraulics and the likes are other related studies gaining momentums in the recent past.

Therefore, I request the student community not to lose sight of the immense possibilities and opportunities that a degree in civil engineering might offer.

