

Simply Fab

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BUYING A HOME IN INDIA IS NO easy job. If you've been there, done that, you probably know that it takes donkeys years to complete a project. And if through some stroke of luck you do end up owning a house, you'll need more than luck to maintain it.

Here's a construction technique that can put an end to all your housing woes. Three times faster than the traditional method, it costs the same and is virtually maintenance free. Here's introducing Plaswall, a technique by Fabtech Sterling Building Technologies Pvt Ltd, that aims to address the housing need in India and claims to be a household name in other countries.

Site seeing

The company recently took Hot Property to Manila, Philippines, to give us a first-hand demo of how the technique works. We were surprised to see a meagre 15-odd labourers fussing around at the workshop. There were no noisy drills and messy floors — the men were effortlessly working on prefabricated fibre-reinforced formwork that would be used as walls with braces supporting the concreting.

Mark Taylor, chairman and operations director, Sterling Construction and Development Corporation, told us, "We need considerably lesser manpower for construction. The skilled labour too is reduced." And if you feel that the technique is architecturally limited, you have another think coming.

Taylor tells us that over the last 10 years, he's built many dramatic buildings, even circular ones. His own home in Manila bears testimony to it. Tastefully conceptualised, it is a visual treat. And though he concedes that they don't offer homes at a super low cost, their prices are competitive.

While other prices might go higher and higher, theirs would stay constant, guaranteeing you an executive finish for the same price.

On time, every time

The biggest advantage, especially with regards to India, is that you can expect the completion of a project within the stipulated timeframe. Mark tells us that they've even completed projects in as less as 90 days flat, without compromising on the quality.

We bet by now you're thinking that this technique sounds too good to be true. Just hang in there. It does have its downside too, as we found out.

Says Asaif Khan, director, Fabtech Sterling Building Technologies Pvt Ltd, "The biggest challenge for us is to reach out to the Indian builder. The fact that we're fairly new in India is a hurdle in itself even though we've received great response from the Indian builder fraternity so far." The group is already working on a few projects in the country and has one planned in Mumbai too.

Another important drawback that the company faces is the problem of ready finance. Considering that this technique speeds up the construction of a project, the builder has to come up with ways and means to make the moolah available. And we all know how long the legalities and the paperwork take in our country!

But all said and done, it is heartening to know that we finally have a system in place that can assure us the delivery of our homes on time without a corresponding hike in the price tag. This might not be the answer to Mumbai's dilemma of affordable housing, but maybe it's a step in the direction.

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STILL WATERS: Workers giving the finishing touches to a high-end villa complete with a swimming pool and garden



The facade of an affordable home in Manila



Workers setting up the basic structure of a home near Manila



Workers are busy painting the exteriors of a bungalow house