



Cabral Group

ORIGIN
 1980

BUSINESSES
 Shipbuilding, ship repair, hospitality
 and ore-handling

It is yet another busy day for Nigel Cabral, the managing partner of the Cabral Group. The young and energetic entrepreneur, all of 39 years, is quite at ease overseeing the group's diverse interests - shipbuilding, ship repair and maintenance, hospitality and ore-handling, among others.

Nigel and his brother, Osric, have been assiduously expanding the group, which their father, Francis Cabral, had painstakingly built in the past three decades. Nigel Cabral is putting to practice all the lofty theories of business management that he imbibed from Bryant University, USA, and the prestigious London Business School. No wonder, he heads the Young Entrepreneur's Forum of the Goa Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

Osric, on the other hand, provides the technical and operational backbone to the group. A degree in Maritime Technology from the University of Southampton, and his involvement in the group's operations has given him an in-depth knowledge of the business.

Barges to ships

Back from Tanzania in the late 1970s, Francis Cabral ventured into the trucking business to cater to the thriving mining industry. Gradually, he shifted from land to water and set up Cabral & Co, which was into barge repair and maintenance. The company shot into limelight in 1980 by building a 1,000-tonne barge. In 1986, Nigel Shipyard was born, which today caters to repair and maintenance of barges and other vessels.

"My father often used to tell us that diversification is the key to success as it reduces the risks associated with a

Anchoring growth

With deft diversification and well-thought forays, the Cabral Group has carved a niche in Goa's industrial landscape.

single sector," recalls a nostalgic Mr Cabral. True to his words, Francis Cabral, who passed away in 2008, built the group on the firm foundation of diversification.

A brief stint with plastics between 1988 and 1996 did not achieve the desired results. But the setback did not dissuade the Cabrals from moving ahead. The group acquired Zuari Stain-

cation. In 2000, the group acquired William's Beach Resort, a 40-room resort in tourist hot spot Colva and entered the hospitality sector.

"Our priority is to expand our service offering in marine vessel construction as well as to migrate up the value chain in terms of services being offered," stresses Mr Cabral. The group is eyeing the mid-market small dry bulk



OSRIC (LEFT) AND NIGEL CABRAL Managing Partners

less Steel Industries in 1993 and went ahead with its diversification agenda.

The turning point came in 1997 when the Cabrals bought Mandovi Shipyard from the Timblos. They renamed it West Coast Shipyard (WCS), a sprawling 14,000-sq metre shipyard in Loutolim along the Zuari river. WCS, which emerged as the group's flagship company, changed the fortune of the Cabral Group as one of Goa's prominent shipbuilders.

From a 1,800-tonne barge in 1997, WCS today has capacity to build ships of 5,000 tonnes and up to 125 meters. From vessels catering to the mining industry to inland waterway and coastal vessels, WCS boasts of diverse inventory of marine vessels. Its two dry docks, equipped with modern machines, happen to be the biggest among Goa's private sector shipyards.

New forays

Meanwhile, the Cabral Group is busy doing what it does the best: diversifi-

carriers. It has entered into a JV with a Portuguese company with the goal of building vessels for the Indian Navy. The Cabrals are also planning to invest in the highly-lucrative offshore segment and yachts.

The Cabral Group has forayed into ore-handling industry by setting up Screening Machines India. The company will distribute material-crushing and screening equipment of Ohio, US-based Screening Machine Industries, thereby enhancing its presence in the ore-handling supply chain. Cabrals are also domestic partners of Aero GP, a motor sports series involving high-performance airplanes racing around a tight circuit at near ground level. It is planning to have its first event in India early next year.

From barges to shipbuilding and now with many new forays on the cards, the Cabral siblings are set to take the Group on a new growth trajectory. ■