



## **Emerging Trends in Tile & Stone Installation System**

It is a common misconception among buyers in the market that new products are marketed under the umbrella of new technology.

However from the industry point of view I would say new products are developed to meet advancements in technology and offer better benefits to the consumer.

I have often come across consumers, tile masons and even architects saying we have been using a particular traditional system/products for tile/stone installation for years and hence why should we change to new technology/products?

Let us look at some of the reasons that necessitate the use of new technology/products over the present traditional systems.

- **SUBSTRATES ARE DIVERSE**

Earlier tile/stone were installed only on cement plaster / concrete, however today they are installed on substrates as diverse as Plywood, Gypsum board, Metal, Glass, Tile over mosaic, Tile over Tile, Tile over Stone etc.

Traditional cement-sand mortar does not have the bonding properties, strength & flexibility to bond successfully to such substrates!

- **TILES ARE CHANGING**

Earlier tiles were mostly clay tiles with ceramic coating and available in sizes of 4"X4", 8"X8" to a max size of 12"X12", however today tiles are not restricted to ceramic tiles. There are new generation tiles like Porcelain/Vitrified tiles, Glass mosaic tiles, Agglomerates, Designer tiles.

Further some of the above tiles are available in sizes as big as 3'X3'

Ordinary cement-sand does not have the ability to bond to such tiles!

- STONES ARE OF MULTIPLE KINDS

In olden days stones used in India were mostly Bethemcherla, Dholpur, Shahbad, Rajasthani marble, Granite etc, however with the open market and exposure to the west & Europe, natural stones from Italy, Spain, Iran, Nepal etc are finding customers and are extensively used here.

Most of these stones are porous in nature and require proper products and installation techniques to avoid picture framing or water patch formation on the surface of the stones.

Even some of the Indian granite like Sadar Ali Grey granite, Raw silk etc are porous in nature and absorb moisture from the cement-sand mortar when laid in traditional method and form water patches on the surface. With the advent of new technology problems associated with such type of stones are controlled to a large extent.

- APPLICATIONS ARE VARIED

Earlier tile/stone installations were mostly restricted to bathrooms, however today tiles are used almost everywhere like commercial floors, residential floors, kitchens, swimming pools, external facades, industrial floor/walls etc.

All above installations are highly demanding and varied in nature, with traditional system of cement-sand mortar there have been several failures leading us towards new technology products.

- CONSTRUCTION PRACTICES ARE CHANGING

In earlier days a normal house took 2-3 years for construction, the same house now takes just about a year. This is possible due to advanced machinery available and new generation products which are much easier and faster to use.

There are several commercial and Industrial projects which are time bound, any extra time means huge losses!

The new technology products enable installation of tile/stone at least 100% faster and at the same time provide reliability and better performance.

- ARCHITECTURAL DESIGNS ARE CHANGING

Architects dream of innovative designs for every project resulting in varied and new applications of tile/stone which require high performance speciality products to fit with the application demand.

There is recent example of tiles being specified for bathrooms in a very prestigious train in India. The tiles are to be laid on a plywood sheet. Imagine the vibrations, stress, shock and impact the adhesive is going to experience in such an installation.

Can traditional cement-sand mortar withstand such conditions?

New technology products available with Laticrete to successfully complete a tile/stone installation are

- Tile/stone adhesives – cement based/epoxy based
- Cement based colour tile grouts
- Stain free epoxy tile grouts
- Water proof membranes
- Plaster/mortar admix
- Tile/stone care products
- Silicone sealants

However before concluding, I would recommend to the Architects that since there would be many companies manufacturing such products, care should be taken to look at the Product manufacturer's strength, capability, expertise and proven track record before deciding to make any specifications or recommendations.

