

Today's Paper » NATIONAL » KERALA

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NIIST to join hands with NGO

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Manufacturing facility to produce pots from coir fibre waste

The National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology (NIIST), Thiruvananthapuram, a constituent laboratory under the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), has joined hands with Sevashram, **an NGO based in Angamaly, Ernakulam, to set up a manufacturing facility to produce coir-rubber composite (CRC) pots from coir fibre waste.**

Sevashram is a registered charitable society, which creates employment opportunities for socially and economically backward entrepreneurs.

The process know-how developed by CSIR-NIIST helps to address the serious issue of disposal of fibre waste generated by the coir industry in Kerala.

The technology involves bonding coir fibre waste with natural rubber latex (NRL) to form 'continuous sheets' that could be used for the production of garden pots, rigid/flexible panels or floor tiles. Besides eco-friendliness and bio-degradability, some of the unique selling propositions of such coir pots are light weight, long term durability in service (non-breakability), weather resistance, and lower cost compared to clay pots of similar capacity. The containers could also be produced in different designs, shapes, and colours according to customer requirements and for indoor and outdoor applications. In the long run, the preformed coir sheets could be used as 'reinforcing plies' for composite products such as rubber floor tiles, laminates, and rigid composites as partition boards.

A spokesman for CSIR-NIIST said the growing trend of horticulture and 'kitchen-gardening' both in the rural and urban areas would create a high demand for the CRC pots as a substitute for clay pots.

The spokesman said the joint venture was aimed at creating 'wealth from waste' (value addition) and alleviation of environmental problems caused by coir fibre waste at least to a small extent. It would also help generate employment opportunities in the rural sector, he added.