

## CSIR-NIIST to transfer tech for making wood substitute

Our Bureau



Thiruvananthapuram, Sept. 17:

The CSIR-National Institute for Interdisciplinary Science and Technology-Thiruvananthapuram (NIIST) is ready to transfer the latest home-grown technology.

NIIST will sign a memorandum of understanding with Kerala Furniture Consortium Pvt Ltd (KFCPL) for the purpose on Wednesday.

This is for transfer of the technology for making wood substitute from natural fibre composites, an official spokesman said here.

KFCPL will use the coir composite developed by CSIR-NIIST as a raw material to be used as an alternative substitute for hardwood.

The natural fibre polymer composite named 'polycoir' has been found to be suitable as a substitute for wood-based or alternative products, the spokesman said.

The process for making 'polycoir' utilises coir fibre as well as other natural fibres such as banana, jute, sisal etc.

Further technical development required for commercialisation of fibre composites will be undertaken jointly by the parties to the MoU.

The composite will be converted by KFCPL into unique design formats of furniture and accessories on market requirements.

### **GREAT POTENTIAL**

According to Suresh Das, director, CSIR-NIIST, there is great potential for employing unutilised or underutilised lingo-cellulosic fibres for making composite material.

The material can be engineered as per requirement and possesses several unique properties like fire, termite and water resistance.

Surface properties as well as physical and mechanical attributes may also be fine-tuned as per requirement.

KFCPL now joins hands with CSIR-NIIST for employing natural resources in the making of alternate materials, which can substitute wood, the spokesman said.

K.P. Raveendran, managing director, KFCPL, said that a range of knocked-down furniture series would be brought out using this material by the end of this year.

## **BENCHMARKED CLUSTER**

KFCPL is one of the seven clusters benchmarked by the National Innovation Council under the chairmanship of Sam Pitroda.

It is a common facility centre to pursue seasoning, designing, standardising, testing and finishing of rubber woods for manufacturing furniture.

As an innovation cluster of national importance, KFCPL is dedicated to develop patented alternate substitutes for the deficient rainforest hardwood.

The cluster is destined to boost innovation and competitiveness in the micro, small and medium enterprises sector in the State.

This is sought to be done by upgrading the quality of the furniture and related industry business environment.

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