

## **Fishermen should try this low-cost boat made from waste**



Floods last year taught Keralites a hard lesson.

Marooned people realised a boat could make all the difference.

Hereafter, don't throw away those hardboard, wood and fibreglass pieces left behind by workmen. They are ideal materials to build a strong boat that can carry three people.

It is the South Indian Federation of Fishermen Societies (SIFFS) that is behind the initiative of turning such items of waste into 12-foot-long boats named 'Poombatta' (butterfly). Vincent Jain, head of the boat building yard at SIFFS, is in charge of the work.

The small boat is suitable for fishing in inland waterways as well as near the seashore. While such a boat normally costs between Rs 40,000 and 45,000, Poombatta is available for less than Rs 20,000. The low price makes the boat an attractive option for fishermen and helps fulfill their dreams of owning a boat.

SIFFS uses wood pieces of packing items for building the boat, which has sufficient strength to be used in the water bodies. It is also pointed out that women also could get the necessary training and start boat-building units.

Poombatta is powered by a 2.5 hp engine and a trial was successfully conducted in the Veli lake on March 21, said Vincent. He said that three persons can travel comfortably in Poombatta.

## **Bigger boat**

Apart from Poombatta, SIFFS has built Sea Dragon, a bigger boat with 44 feet length, 26 hp inboard engine and solar panels. It is also equipped with safety lights, life jackets and fire extinguishers. In addition, Sea Dragon comes with LED lights and indicator. Many big boats have such equipment, but they are often never used as the batteries would drain easily. But this problem is overcome in Sea Dragon by installing solar panels. Yet another safety feature in Sea Dragon is the Lifeline system.