

RESOURCE | DECLINE

■ No measures for conservation and check on over-usage led to its extinction

Catamaran timber vanishes from forests

S.N.V. SUDHIR | DC
VISAKHAPATNAM, JULY 21

Over usage of 'Reyya Karra' whose scientific name is *Albizia Chiniasis*, which was once abundantly available in the entire stretch of Eastern Ghats, had pushed the timber into oblivion.

The traditional catamaran boats used by fishermen across the east coast have been now replaced by fiber boats due to non availability of this 'Reyya Karra'. The timber is also used in match box making and

Veneer kind plywood making industry.

No proper check on over usage of the timber and no measures of conservation has led to its extinction. Scientists are now asking the authorities to put *Albizia Chiniasis*, into the Red Data Book of IUCN and take measures of plantation which may take many years from now for them to grow into bigger trees and cater to the society. There used to be some lakhs of catamarans used for fishing along the east coast from Puri to



Kanyakumari. Due to non availability of this timber since a few years, local fishermen have been getting a similar timber *Taanuku Karra Albizia Falcatarta* from Tamil Naidu and

Kerala, where the resources are also said to be on the decline.

"Since the reyya karra is not available locally and the similar resources dried up in the neighbouring

states we have found an alternative to it-boorugu karra- *Bombax Cerba*, which is also available in the local forests. After thorough research we have found this boorugu karra as an alternative and had done chemical treatment but not many fishermen are interested and are going for fibre," said Dr M Balaji, scientist at Institute of wood science and technology.

Reyya karra catamarans which are being used on east coast since ages seem to be favourite of fisher-

men due to its nature of light weight yet strong. "It's called unsinkable craft. It will not sink even if the craft is burdened with additional weight. It's a primitive and best design. Unfortunately it is now not available," said scientist M.V. Rao at the wood research institute. The motorised shore based fishing trawlers are made using locally available wood like vepa, chintha, neredu and tasi karra-*Anogeissus Acuminata* which is available in the forests of Andhra Odisha border