

Declining fish stocks and shortage of men choosing to fish, combined with the cost of timber and labour are making the time-consuming sewn-wooden construction uneconomic. It is based on the remarkable properties of three local trees. Wild Mango timber (*Mangifera indica*) forms the hull; the Coconut Palm (*Cocos nucifera*) supplies the quantities of coir required to pad seams and make all the cordage required; the Cashew Nut Tree (*Anacardium occidentale*) - as also the native species *Semecarpus anacardium* - provides a highly caustic preservative oil known as *dikh* which enables a pirogue properly maintained to survive indefinitely without periodic resewing.

In the construction the hollowed log (underbody) is not weakened by expansion. Nor in the past was it perforated with a bung-hole or attachments for a false-keel, although both these modifications can be seen today on old and repaired craft. A boss was reserved in the bottom amidships, incut with a mast-step on small pirogues which are propelled by sail or, more frequently, by outboard motors (Fig.3).



Figure 3. a) pirogue 6.8m long with a cotton dipping lugsail. Cova. P. O'Beirnes; b) pirogue 7.9m long with steps for mast and support, to be secured to its mast-thwart by an *onn*. Agonda. Author.