

NISHANT'S SPACE

MY VIEW'S ON LIFE THE UNIVERSE AND EVERYTHING ELSE.

WEDNESDAY, JULY 2, 2008

eco bag

The Eco Bag story starts way back in 2002 when the Australian Federal Government studied the use of throwaway plastic bags and threatened to outlaw them if retailers did not voluntarily discourage their use. Then in 2003 the government negotiated with the Australian Retailers Association for a voluntary progressive reduction of plastic bag use which led to a number of initiatives, including the widespread distribution and promotion of Green Bags. Green bags have taken Australia by storm, replacing over 80 percent of plastic bags at supermarkets and grocery stores. These bags are made out of hardy polymers or paper and are reusable and recyclable. Green Bags have become a fashion statement in Australia and its almost taboo to be caught walking on the streets swinging about the dreaded plastic packet. This is the template we had in mind when we approached Small Steps and major Indian retailers and industrialists hoping to implement a similar scheme in India as well. The pilot city would be Namma Bengaluru. The potential for such an endeavour is seemingly infinite ; supermarket chains around the city churn out tens of thousands of plastic bags every single day. Unfortunately, though the factories producing these bags are in full swing around the clock, facilities to dispose of this waste are almost non-existent. At many supermarkets the plastic psyche is so deeply entrenched that entire packaging, accounting and even security systems have been designed and created around them. Many shops don't allow you to leave the premises without requesting you to display a plastic bag sealed with another ugly plastic loop, to verify that you didn't indulge in any shop lifting on your way out. In some other supermarkets, goods from separate sections such as fruits , vegetables and breads are placed in separate packets for the sake of organization and classification, and are then shoved without flinching into yet another gaudy plastic bag. Even though people don't seem to make a fuss , on the inside they must be cringing. This is the sentiment we hope to ride on. We believe that if people are given a choice , given the opportunity and the means to change the status quo they will rise to the occasion and support an initiative like eco bags. All they have to do is pay a nominal fee , 10-15 rs to purchase a small steps eco bag and suddenly they own the means to combat a serious cause of environmental degradation. We hope to make these bags available at every major supermarket retail outlet and provide people with choice , hope and change. The bags will be financed in part by corporate sponsorship via advertisements printed on the bags and it is an excellent opportunity for companies to put their money where their mouths are and flex their green muscles. Through the advertising revenue we hope to achieve economic sustainability and since the bags are produced by women producer groups in villages it already fulfills the criteria of social sustainability. These terms should now become a norm in our economic and business language and we hope that this initiative is

BLOG ARCHIVE

- ▼ 2008 (19)
 - ▶ August (1)
 - ▼ July (1)
 - eco bag
 - ▶ February (17)

ABOUT ME

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Born in Bangalore, studied in Mallya Aditi International School for 14 years, did the Cambridge A-levels, ran a company in India which produced cloth eco-bags, interested in design thinking, sustainable development, social entrepreneurship, public policy and biology. Currently a Freshman at Stanford university.

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