Plastic bags despite being banned in several states continue to dominate the sales-purchase domain. India generates more than 5.6 billion toxic plastic waste every year. Ashwath Hegde, a Manglore-based entrepreneur, thought of an alternative to replace plastic with a sustainable eco-friendly material.

After around four years of research Ashwath has found a green technology. He along with 11 other scientists and environmentalists have come up with their company named Envigreen Biotech India Pvt. Ltd. The company produces 100% organic, biodegradable and edible bags that look and feel just like plastic bags.

These environment friendly edible bags are made with a combination of natural starch (from potato and tapioca), vegetable oil derivatives and vegetable waste. The technology provides Envigreen products an electric dissipative feature (suitable for electronic wrapping) along with anti-static feature, dust repellent, oxygen barrier-corrosion prevention and oil/grease resistance.

The bags will naturally degrade in 180 days and if they are submerged in water they disappear in a day. It can also carry the same weight as any other conventional bags, with the largest being able to lug 8-10 kilograms. The bags are even edible and will cause no harm to animals if ingested. To prove this, Ashwath even consumed a bag after boiling it in water.

“The EnviGreen (EG) bags are 100 per cent organic, edible and recyclable which will eliminate plastic from our country,” said Hegde.

A member of Ashwath’s team said the cost of one organic bag is more than that of a plastic bag but less than that of a cloth bag. The company claims that it doesn’t use even one per cent of plastic and any other chemicals. Also, the paint used for printing on the bags is natural and organic.

Several tests have been conducted by the Karnataka State Pollution Control Board (KSPCB), Central Institute of Plastics Engineering and Technology and Sri Ram Institute for Industrial Research to ensure there was no plastic element in the bags. All the organisations have given them a green signal.

Apart from carry bags, the company is also manufacturing a variety of products such as trash bags, oil and grease sachets, bin liners, packaging films, aprons, wrapping covers, laundry bag, etc. The company is acquiring vegetable wastes from farmers which would be highly profitable and a good source of alternate income for farmers.

EnviGreen bags will not just help ease the problem of plastic waste but also help to find a balance between humans and the environment.