

Paper: Our Quintessential Companion



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Introduction

Paper was invented about 2000 years ago and since then it has literally written itself into our history and our lives. Paper has enriched our lives in ways we often do not notice in our daily life. I believe Paper is our friend from cradle to grave, right from our birth in the form of birth certificate until our departure in the form of Will or death certificate. Paper grows old with us and bears the marks of a lifelong journey. On daily basis, dawn to dusk we meet our friend from newspapers in morning to reading story books to our children at night. Paper has made its way in such wide applications in our daily lives that without paper our lives will have permanent voids in it.

It is important for us to understand the value paper brings in our life and its impact on environment in Indian context.

Uses of Paper

Writing and Printing Paper

India has one of the largest networks of education and holds lot of potential for future development. There are over 40,000 colleges, over 1000 universities in India. Government has increased its spending on Educational sector in last few years. Therefore, despite the digital alternatives the demand of paper in Education sector is on the rise. Paper has a unique value proposition in a student's life; it gives knowledge, acts as a mediator between an author and the reader, students writes, learn and makes fortune with it. Some studies showed that students of all ages, from elementary school to college, tend to absorb more when they are reading on paper than on screens, especially the nonfiction material. Working on paper makes us more productive, receptive and attentive. The touch and feel of paper evokes interest and makes reading more pleasurable. So even in the digital age, our education sector continues to rely on paper.

Paper continues in professional world and often the break through that we receive are given on a paper in the form of letter of appointment, promotions, certificates and other acknowledgements. Paper is used in corporate offices; government offices, storing government records etc.

In India, the Writing and Printing category is growing at 3.5 to 4 % and is fairly better than world's average annual growth of 2%. The current Indian market size for this category is 38-40 lakhs tonnes per year.

Packaging Paper

Application of paper in packaging is increasing many folds. The boost of e-commerce, online food delivery, primary



and secondary packaging, carry bags etc has created a huge demand. The category is growing at 10-11 % and has a market size of 26 lakhs tonnes in India. It includes food-packaging paper, which is growing at 10-12 % and has a market size of 1.2 lakhs tonnes and Cup stock, which has similar growth and a market size of 2 lakhs tonnes. Premium Cup stock has proven a landmark product as it has potentially replaced plastic cups and straws. The paper alternatives of plastic undergo lot of R&D and quality testing to retain the essential features like strength, impermeability and offer a biodegradable solution. So, we expect lot of paper applications making their way to replace plastic.

Coated Paper

India has a demand of about 9 lakhs tonnes of coated paper in different applications like printing magazines and journals, photographs, book covers, catalogues and other promotional materials. There is a demand supply mismatch in our country and about 50% of the demand is met through imports. The sector is growing at 12-13% and offers a lot of potential for Indian paper industry.

Personal care and Hygiene category

There was a transactional change in the mindset of people towards personal care and hygiene due to Covid. Some paper products saw unprecedented demand like tissues,

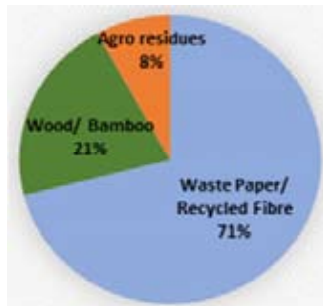
Paper Day write-up

wet wipes, packaging of personal care products. Most of these changes with improved safety and hygiene requirements are going to be permanent in nature. This category is growing about 15 %. The current market size is about 60 thousand tonnes but it is expected to grow many folds in next few years.

The per capita consumption of paper in India is about 15kg and that of world is 57kg. Use of paper has lot to do with a country's population, demography, culture, life style, education and so the use of paper in India will be less than that of the world. However, some market research suggest that the per capita consumption is likely to go up to 17-18 kg in next few years.

Paper Production in India

There are about 850 paper mills in India making 19 million tonnes of ecofriendly Paper and paper products. We call this Paper eco-friendly as largely, it is made from recycled paper, Agro residues and trees grown on farmland. Agro residues like bagasse, wheat straw, rice husk etc are used in papermaking. So, paper is being made from recycled or waste products, which shows that the origin of paper is so environment friendly.



Further, the wood that is used in paper making comes from farm forestry or social forestry models where farmers grow tree plantations on their farmlands, which is otherwise not suitable for growing regular seasonal crops. Paper industry is actively promoting tree plantations by collaborating with farmers from last two decades. Every year more trees are planted than harvested. About 1.2 million hectare area has been planted by Paper Industry so far. Paper Industry provide farmers with good quality planting material, educate them on the technical knowhow, silvicultural practices and buy back arrangement of the final produce which is wood. Here a less productive farmland is used for plantation development, which gives farmers alternate source of income and has low risk unlike the seasonal crops. Such Plantation programs plays pivotal role in adding to country's green cover, improve carbon sequestration, supply raw material to wood based industries, fuel and fodder for domestic use.

Sustainable Solution

Paper production supports sustainable forest management, the trees used for papermaking do not come from forestland or any green belt; they are grown and harvested from a

farmland in a sustainable manner making it a win-win situation for farmers, industry and most importantly the environment. Clearly it does not result in deforestation, on the contrary, lot of fuelwood is generated from those farmlands which is used in tribal areas, villages and small scale industries like small hotel, brick kilns etc as fuel. This reduces pressure on forests for fuelwood requirement. Therefore, the plantation programs helps in avoiding deforestation.



Plastic has been with us for more than 100 years now. Every year, 400 million tonnes of plastic is produced and 40% of that is single-use. Plastic has strength & barrier properties which makes it a preferred commodity in many ways but it does not go well when it comes to environment friendliness as it is not recyclable, bio-degradable or easily compostable. It takes several hundred years to be completely degraded and its waste results in landfills. This cannot continue and has to stop.

Paper is seen as an environmental friendly substitute for some of the plastic applications and worldwide consumers have shown their interest in such paper applications.

Conclusion

Paper is green. Paper is sustainable. Its raw material comes from responsibly managed sources. Paper demand and its application are on the rise and we are using it more than ever. So, let's try to replace more plastic especially the single use plastic with paper and paper products. We can all contribute to environment by using a biodegradable substitute.

SAY YES TO PAPER!!!



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