

URBAN LANDSCAPE IS BECOMING A BIG OPPORTUNITY



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Puneet Dhawan,
Sr. VP and Business Head (Lighting),
Orient Electric Limited

With India eyeing manufacturing capacity of 1.2 billion LED bulbs, lighting industry is expected to see a growth of 13 per cent to 15 per cent until 2020. According to a report by ELCOMA, the lighting industry is expected to reduce energy consumption for lighting from the present 18 per cent of total power consumption to 13 per cent by 2020 by introducing more energy efficient products. The focus has now been shifted to smart lighting. In an interaction with Subhjit Roy, Orient Electric's Sr. VP and Business Head (Lighting) Puneet Dhawan shares his thoughts on what he believes will be the next big thing in the lighting industry and how his company is gearing up for it. Edited excerpts:

Q Lighting has evolved from conventional to LEDs. How the business has evolved with this?

A Till recently, lighting business or more precisely conventional lighting business

was the forte of 2-3 multinationals who had put lots of research and efforts into product development especially in the field of light source. Control gears required for these light sources was generally magnetic and transition to electronics control gear had started in later stage of conventional lighting era but LED lighting has brought about a change in this during last 5 years and now the light source is no longer limited to so-called 'major' lighting companies. Today, light source is LED and LED manufacturers are not necessarily lighting companies and the major LED source manufacturing companies are not traditional lighting companies. So, one important aspect of lighting – light source has gone beyond control of lighting companies. The other aspect which has come along with LED is the associated electronics because for all LED light sources, there is the need to have suitable electronics drivers. Another competence which is required now is knowledge of electronics design and manufacturing and assembly of electronic components or drivers. These two factors have totally changed the business model of lighting companies. For us at Orient Electric, our electronics competency which we started developing in 2013-2014 by putting up an electronics plant for manufacturing CFL drivers has actually helped a lot in this transition. We were ready with our electronics design and manufacturing of electronics LED drivers much ahead of other lighting competitors and since LED light source was globally available to us on equal footing with other players, we were able to quickly adopt to this transition.

Further, we made significant investment in thermal management technology as it is essential to design a good housing for the LED light source to manage the generated heat well.

Q How significant is your lighting business as far as Orient electric as a group is concerned?

A Lighting business is the foremost growing business within the company and we are also the fastest growing company in the lighting business within the trade. With evolving consumer needs and strong institutional and government demand, we have positive outlook for the future.

Q What is your position in the market?

A We are well placed in the B2C business with a double-digit market share. In lamps manufacturing we are amongst the first three manufacturers in terms of quantities manufactured in non-OEM sector. In LED streetlights also, we are one of the largest manufacturers in the country in the non-OEM category.

B2G business, which we started 2 years ago, has given us very good results and we have bagged many B2G

projects in various luminaires in industrial, commercial and street light segments.

Q IoT has become the new buzzword. How do you see Orient Electric's preparedness on this front?

A Lighting industry is evolving very fast both in terms of technology and the associated cost. The future depends on both: technology has to become simpler and cost has to become affordable for consumers. Otherwise it will remain a niche market. We are evaluating all the options like Bluetooth and Wi-Fi. We should be able to launch common platform for all our products very soon.

Q Is it applicable to street lighting as well?

A Street lighting is not part of that as it is user specific and tender specific. We have supplied Centralised Control & Monitoring System (CCMS) for remote-controlled and remote monitoring of street lights in Himachal Pradesh and Delhi Cantonment. More than 25,000 lights right now are being centrally-controlled with those systems.

We have now gone for smart city requirements with individual controllers where one can individually control light or a group of lights. We are also working on new product development with dimming options, occupancy sensor and motion sensor. Further, we have recently introduced smart bulb for indoor spaces.

Q Did you launch any other new products in the market?

A Urban landscape is becoming a big opportunity for spending. Authorities and government agencies feel that our outdoors need to be much more inviting to the citizens. On this front, we have launched an extensive range of urban landscape lighting. We have also launched a range of premium indoor fixtures, chandeliers, wall mounted and ceiling mounted lights.

Q You have also launched 5-Star LED bulb. What are its unique attributes?

A We were the first lighting company in India to introduce 3-Star rated LED bulbs way back in 2016. In our consistent endeavour to provide value to consumers, we are once again the pioneers to introduce the 9W LED bulbs with BEE (Bureau of Energy Efficiency) 5-Star rating award. This new LED bulb meets BIS safety standards, has long life of 25,000 hours, and delivers 120 lumens per watt. Its unique attributes include: low-glare, fixture-free and 30 per cent brighter than 3-Star LEDs.