

The Lighting Trail

Lighting, lasers and lighting console sales and distribution has grown robustly across the Indian market. Lighting engineer and founder of artist and event management agency, Mixtape - Naveen Deshpande, talks to PT about the current trends in lighting and growth and future of the Indian lighting industry.

Growth of Indian Lighting Industry

The demand for professional lighting equipment has grown in both rental as well as the fixed install market. Top end rental companies today stock the world's leading brands in entertainment lighting like Clay Paky, Robe and Martin Lighting, however expensive, as top end lighting designers demand this quality in their riders with international top acts performing in India.

"When it comes to Indian Lighting market and its growth in the past decade in terms of technology and equipment, then it's safe to say we won't get electrocuted now :) (Joking).

There has been a tremendous growth. We are obviously a bit behind in terms of fixtures reaching our continent at the same time it is launched but I am happy to see the competitive inventory being introduced in the market by different vendors. It clearly shows there is an urge to grow and cope up with technology and inventory available outside of India. While designing the lighting for an event or venue, creative decisions are primarily dependent on two things i.e. type of content and available inventory. Most of the established vendors in India have pretty much everything I need so I work backward and design accordingly," says Deshpande.

Stage lighting for big music acts driven by EDMs and International pop and rock stars has grown rapidly in India, and with more international artistes expected to perform in the coming years, rental companies find it necessary to boast of a global quality inventory. However, often the budgets aren't planned or allocated properly for these big acts. "As a designer and being into the event management world, changes and budget are always an inevitable part, but I have been quite fortunate to

work with clients who understand the creative approach of lighting. If the idea resonates, then most of the time they come ahead to support what you have in mind. Changes, budgets, adjustments will always be a criteria in the event management world.

The resources to bring the creative ideas to life are getting better now, especially, in terms of budgets. It's just been a few years since the artists, music festivals and big events have started demanding LD's, so there definitely is a need and it's only going to get better from here."

Technology Trends

"From the kind of lighting inventory available and popular in the Indian market, I really like the new Martin line of fixtures. The **VDO sceptor**, **Dotron** series has been on top of my mind and I have been trying out few ideas on how I can integrate the same in my shows. I am waiting for the Martin Vipers to hit the market soon. Last year at the NH7 Weekender Festival, I was fortunate enough to use **Showtech Sunstrips**, which have been my favorite from then on, and they look fantastic. Some of the stuff, which is picking up now are the **B - Eyes**, **Shapeshifters** currently available all over India," he says.

"If we talk about the widespread infiltration of cheap Chinese products, which are of low-quality, then very honestly, it's a never-ending fight,

“Passionately sharing your experiences and knowledge with others is the only way to nurture and help the lighting industry grow in India.”



Naveen Deshpande started out as a drummer for death metal band *Black Hole Theory*. He has also worked as a radio jockey at a Planet M store in Pune as a teenager. Practically, Naveen grew up alongside the very nascent indie rock scene in the country.

As this scene evolved, mutated and branched into alternative rock, fusion, electronic and other live music avenues, he used his passion for music and penchant for the business to stack up experience in managing bands, booking shows, dealing with promoters and venues, and eventually producing shows. The main forte of his company – Mixtape, is artist management, bookings, touring and event management. Also, as an extension under events, the company has set up a Ground Control division which handles lighting and A/V design for multiple music festivals, touring artists and corporate events.

Deshpande being a trained light engineer is still progressing on the path to make this lighting and AV collective the go-to solution provider for any kind of light design requirement in the country.

especially in India. Although I am glad that Avolites and grandMA have joined hands together to work on this issue. Hopefully, we will have the replica police in India too. I have built my career on Avolites, so, I still use it for a lot of my shows. I have also started using grandMA very recently, so I am still exploring that side of technology. My gear list depends on the kind of show I am doing," he adds.

To create a perfect stage, visual content has to be holistic and lasers have been an important aspect of lighting in recent years on stage as well as entertainment venues like pubs, clubs and lounges. "The next big thing that comes into focus is lasers. It just opens up another spectrum altogether. Although, I haven't seen much use of lasers in India except for the international touring acts but I am definitely keen to use them myself and see how I can integrate lights, AV and lasers together."

Future

"The main difference between the lighting industry in India and the lighting industry in developed economies is of safety. I think before anything we all need to ensure that we set good safety standards for all the people working in the lighting world. We are growing pretty fast but it's important for us to not ignore the foundation of any field i.e. safety. In the next five years, the lighting market in India, in terms of stage show lighting, is only going to get better and better and I am really glad to be a part of these avant-garde times," Deshpande enthuses. "A quick advice to the newcomers would be that lighting design is a never-ending creative process and every day you will learn something new so being humble to everyone working with you would be the best way. Passionately sharing your experiences and knowledge with others is the only way to nurture and help the lighting industry grow in India."