



Oasis,
Trinity Centre in Leeds, UK

bringing the product under the spotlight.



"The store design concept is essentially driven by it, as highlighting the product depends on the lighting arrangement. About 80% of the focus goes on lighting," says **Devyani**

Jaiswal, Architect & Interior Designer, DJ Associates.

Lighting plays this role with equal importance



at the store front. "For the façade, brightly lit signage and windows grab attention to convey the store image and entice the customer into the store. Outdoor lights and signage are

also designed to complement the architecture of the store front," comments **Mahesh Krishna, Store Development, Mahindra Retail.**

Criteria for deciding on a lighting design and system would depend on the objectives of the retail format. Lux levels, colour rendering index, energy efficiency, budgets



and most importantly – merchandise sold – act as the key factors in designing a lighting strategy at retail. According to **Dhiren Chheda, Founder, Dhiren Chheda Associates,**

the parameters for deciding the lighting also depend on factors such as – store environment, the height of the store, flooring used, the colour of furniture used etc.

"The key consideration would be to get the right kind of balance between ambience and accent lighting. Ideally the lighting should be merchandise centric, where right lux levels should be maintained on the merchandise. We take references from international resources that treat lighting with utmost

importance and as a key factor in store design," says **Arun Murthy, Project Head, Van Heusen from Madura Garments.**



Adding to this, **Maresh** from Mahindra Retail explains how people, planet & profit act as

key considerations. People: Customer delight, convenience & their safety, Planet: Energy efficient and environment friendly and Profit: Focus on above to build customer base & thereby improve financial benefits.

Giving more insight into the Indian consumer's mind-set about lighting, **Bipratip Dhar, Architect at Epsilon** explains that the perception is predominantly towards "more is good". "This is why we see that most store owners have a tendency to use abundance of light.



However with globalization of design concepts, the store owners, customers

and designers are learning to adapt to "concept lighting", which is currently limited to branded stores in urban areas," he adds.

Investment of Lighting is a key decision for retailers and the trend has been upward in this.

The design fraternity believes that today Indian retailers are giving more importance to and investing in lighting design within their stores. Another critical development is that retailers are beginning to understand that initial investment in good quality lighting fixtures is vital, so that on-going maintenance costs are reduced. Currently, retailers in India typically spend anywhere between 5% and 15% of the total store capex on lighting.

"Lighting fixtures available these days are of very good quality which have a varied range of collection. With this, the onetime investment has gone up and the recurring cost have come down. So once the clients are convinced, they are ready to invest," explains Devyani.

Bringing in the international design agency's viewpoint, **Ken Nisch, Chairman- JGA**

believes that lighting is increasingly becoming



a bigger part of the store budget. "Unfortunately, many clients still look at first costs versus lifetime costs and choose inferior equipment by looking only at the initial

capital investment, versus the ongoing capital, including human capital, that would be required to maintain either a low quality or an ill-suited set of choices when it relates to lighting. I am looking at this as a lifecycle cost and it will take a significant amount of change on the part of corporate management, leading this not solely in the hands of purchasing, but also bringing the operational part of the business into this decision making process."

Access and availability of lighting systems for modern design concepts is an important aspect that determines the quality of the marketplace.

With a mix of home-grown and international manufacturers, India boasts of many companies who can provide lighting solutions to match global standards. Besides offering Indian-made lighting systems or the option to import, today the country has taken a different route where imported components are expertly integrated with Indian fixtures to give desired solutions at competitive prices.

"About 5 years back, we used to import lights but now Indian vendors have given us sufficient confidence to rely on their products, where assembly of good quality imported parts delivers a budget friendly solution. However, the good lighting designers are very rare in India as this still has remained a neglected area in technical institutes," explains Sudhir.

Contrary to this viewpoint, designers and architects in India express that they still prefer to import lighting fixtures. "Unfortunately, we as a country do not have many good lighting companies (in terms of R&D and production). Most of the domestic companies are also either importing components or complete fixtures. So, whenever we want high performance and quality products, there is no choice but to import fixtures," explains **Amit Aurora.**