

## The Flickering Tale of Decorative Illumination of Chandernagore, India: Balancing Craft and Business

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### Abstract

In recent days, the small-scale business in India has found a place in the advanced sector; the small-scale industries, which are the largest in the world, are making substantial contributions to job creation in the non-agricultural sectors in India. The town of Chandernagore, situated on the banks of the Hooghly, has now earned the name of "light town" of West Bengal. Despite the challenges posed by urban sprawl, rapid expansion and the global pandemic, Chandernagore's small-scale lighting industry has managed to seize the opportunity to develop sustainable tourism prospects by illuminating the town's alleys and pathways, showcasing its vibrant culture. Chandernagore has gained recognition as a prominent town in Bengal renowned for its expertise in lighting for decoration surpassing others as a prominent exporter of decorative lighting. This exploratory research on the light maker community of Chandernagore has been undertaken to understand different variables that shape the sustenance of the lighting industry and the social community as well. It aims to go through the journey of the lighting industry of Chandernagore, and to locate the processes through which the light makers continue their services to preserve this art in the post-pandemic world and trace the probable future trajectory. The research employed a combination of both qualitative and quantitative approaches, ranging from in-depth interviews to the analysis of annual reports of MSMEs and other pertinent documents related to small industries in India. Detailed field work was conducted to understand the current challenges that are associated with the lighting business in Chandernagore. In addition to demographic analysis, a perception study was also carried out to acquire a full grasp of the industry's existing challenges. The lighting industry in Chandernagore has enormous potential, and if it can be reinvigorated and reformed, the town can become a successful sustainable industrial and tourism hub outperforming others in all respects.

*Keywords:* Chandernagore; lighting industry; MSME, LED lights; light makers; perception study