

user's choice

HINDUSTAN TIMES-MARS CAR SATISFACTION SURVEY

DID YOU KNOW? 6,905 passenger cars are sold in a day in the country. 23.6 kms per litre - average given by Tata Nano - best in the country. 33,118 Altos sold last year - the highest across all car models. \$1 bn to be invested by Ford in a new factory in Gujarat. 28.4% growth in the hatchback segment in the last financial year.

FIRST OF TWO PARTS

Aaja, is gaadi mein baith jaa...

HOT WHEELS The second edition of the HT-MaRS car satisfaction survey ranks cars according to owners' experiences to find out which is best for Indian roads and why.

How the survey was done

Abhijit Patnaik
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In a growing economy like ours, one of the first signs of increased prosperity is the acquisition of cars. Which is why, despite fuel prices having increased eight times in the last one year, passenger car sales increased by 30% according to the Society of Indian Automobile Manufacturers, higher than the 25% growth the year before. Nothing, it would seem, can diminish the Indian consumers' appetite for cars.

The age-old mentality of 'kitna deti hai' (as aptly captured in recent Maruti ads) has been replaced by a wider concept of value for money; and in the second edition of the HT-MaRS Car Satisfaction survey, we capture the experiences of car owners as an indicator of which models deliver the biggest bang for their buck.

August saw Maruti's new Swift, a revamped Honda Jazz and the latest Volkswagen Jetta heat up the competition. With ever increasing choice, the survey aims to help customers zero-in on the car that deserves a spot in their garage.

Perhaps Fiat owners are not so satisfied a year after they were surveyed for the first time. Perennial favourite Honda City topped its segment again.

In this year's survey, we doubled the sample size, from 1900 respondents to 3800 across 49 car models. The parameters we judged car satisfaction on ranged from engine performance to seating comfort. These were bolstered by the users' experiences while buying the car—the time taken to deliver the car, the conduct of the sales staff etc. We also moved away from the price-band approach of last year to widely accepted industry classifications. Why? Because of price overlaps—a high-end diesel Polo costs almost the same as a base model Hyundai Verano, but a hatchback buyer's perception is different from that of an entry-level sedan.

Satisfaction, of course, itself is a highly debated topic. Does it dictate car sales? After all, Chevrolet—not a market leader in any segment—has two of its models in the top 10. "Surveys on satisfaction rarely follow market share patterns" says Raghu Roy, Managing Director, MaRS, HT's knowledge partner for this project. One explanation for Chevy's good performance could be the excellent service contract they offer.

Average satisfaction got a score of 806 in the A3 (compact) segment versus a score of 888 for Honda Jazz and the latest Volkswagen Jetta heat up the competition. With ever increasing choice, the survey aims to help customers zero-in on the car that deserves a spot in their garage.

Perception-based surveys always throw up some surprising results, and this one is no different. Satisfaction scores for many of the top cars, such as the Honda Accord, Chevrolet Optra, and Maruti Swift have increased from last year in the SUV/MUV segment. Mahindra cars top the charts. Others have not been so lucky. From featuring in the top 10 cars last year, the Fiat Linea and Grande Punto have dropped out faster than a scandal-tainted Tiger Woods from the top rankings. Perhaps Fiat owners are not so satisfied a year after they were surveyed for the first time. Perennial favourite Honda City topped its segment again.

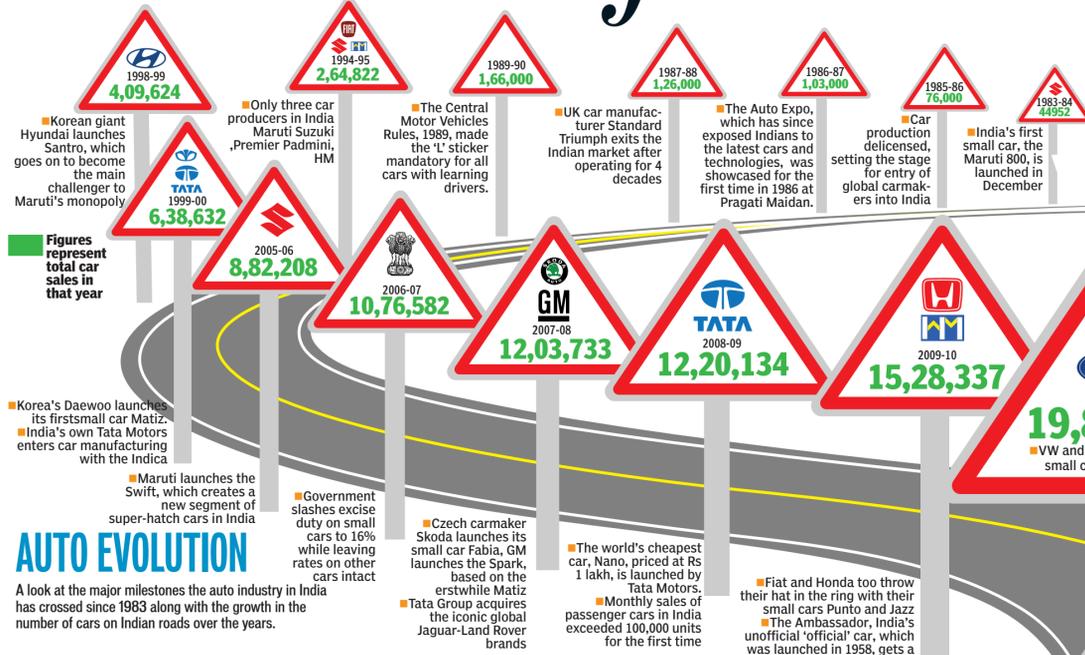
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TOMORROW
Look out for other top cars across segments -hatchbacks to MUVs - in Part 2 of the car satisfaction survey in tomorrow's edition.



Figures represent total car sales in that year

- 1983-84: 44,952 cars
- 1985-86: 76,000 cars
- 1986-87: 1,03,000 cars
- 1987-88: 1,26,000 cars
- 1989-90: 1,66,000 cars
- 1994-95: 2,64,822 cars
- 1998-99: 4,09,624 cars
- 1999-00: 6,38,632 cars
- 2005-06: 8,82,208 cars
- 2006-07: 10,76,582 cars
- 2007-08: 12,03,733 cars
- 2008-09: 12,20,134 cars
- 2009-10: 15,28,337 cars
- 2010-11: 19,82,702 cars
- 2020-21: 90,00,000 cars (Estimated)

Key Milestones:

- 1983-84: India's first small car, the Maruti 800, launched in December.
- 1985-86: Car production delicensed, setting the stage for entry of global carmakers into India.
- 1986-87: The Auto Expo, which has since exposed Indians to the latest cars and technologies, was showcased for the first time in 1986 at Pragati Maidan.
- 1987-88: UK car manufacturer Standard Triumph exits the Indian market after operating for 4 decades.
- 1989-90: The Central Motor Vehicles Rules, 1989, made the 'L' sticker mandatory for all cars with learning drivers.
- 1994-95: Only three car producers in India Maruti Suzuki, Premier Padmini, HMI.
- 1998-99: Korean giant Hyundai launches Santro, which goes on to become the main challenger to Maruti's monopoly.
- 2005-06: India's own Tata Motors enters car manufacturing with the Indica.
- 2006-07: Maruti launches the Swift, which creates a new segment of super-hatch cars in India.
- 2007-08: Government slashes excise duty on small cars to 16% while leaving rates on other cars intact.
- 2008-09: Czech carmaker Skoda launches its small car Fabia, GM launches the Spark, based on the erstwhile Matiz.
- 2009-10: Tata Group acquires the iconic global Jaguar-Land Rover brands.
- 2010-11: VW and Ford launch their small cars Polo and Figo.

Other Milestones:

- 1983-84: The world's cheapest car, Nano, priced at Rs 1 lakh, is launched by Tata Motors.
- 1985-86: Monthly sales of passenger cars in India exceeded 100,000 units for the first time.
- 1986-87: Fiat and Honda too throw their hat in the ring with their small cars Punto and Jazz.
- 1987-88: The Ambassador, India's unofficial 'official' car, which was launched in 1958, gets a new look and modern comforts.

AUTO EVOLUTION

A look at the major milestones the auto industry in India has crossed since 1983 along with the growth in the number of cars on Indian roads over the years.

top 10 overall

This year's top ten cars across segments feature six new entrants - The Maruti Swift, Mahindra Xylo, Chevrolet Spark, Ford Figo and 2 Skoda's - the Superb and Laura. For the second year in a row, the Honda Accord, Chevrolet Optra, Toyota Corolla Altis and Toyota Innova remain in the top ten. The Chevrolet Optra's jump from Rank 7 last year to Rank 3 this year was the biggest, aided by excellent after sales service that has become the company's mantra. Skoda's twin sedans - the Superb and Laura, scored well and came in at ranks 5&9 respectively. The big loser this year? Fiat - both the Punto and Linea dropped out of the top ten. Perhaps, the big surprise is Mahindra's boxy yet practical MUV, the Xylo, storming into the top ten at number 6 with high satisfaction scores.



THE HATCHBACK WITH IT ALL - LOOKS, ECONOMY AND SPEED

1 **MARUTI SWIFT**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.2 P/1.3 D
PRICE 4.22-6.37 LAKH
FUEL ECO 17.94 /21.70 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

super-hit flick 'Bunty aur Babli'. "Swift is every marketing and sales person's delight," says Mayank Pareek, head of marketing and sales at Maruti. "For 6 years, we never had to push the car but had to find ways to deliver it faster to customers willing to wait for months."

It grabbed the attention with its retro looks and unconventional design. For Samar Awasthi, who was then in college and working as a call centre employee, it was love at first sight. "I went for the late night show of Bunty aur Babli and when I saw before its launch it had 9000 bookings. This number swelled to over 30,000 within the first fortnight, thanks largely to a clever marketing play where it was used in the Abhishek Bachchan-Rani Mukherjee



WITH POWER TO THRILL AND LOOKS TO KILL

1 **HONDA CITY**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.5 L P
PRICE 7.49-9.89 LAKH
FUEL ECO 16.7 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

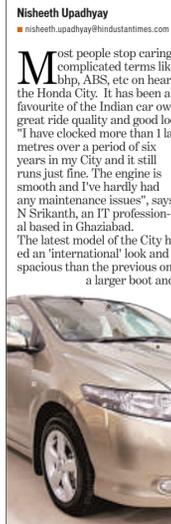
other storage compartments. It ensures that long rides aren't all tiring," says another customer, Vivek Singh. "I had to choose between SX4 and City and I chose the City because the gear transitions were smoother and it was easier to manoeuvre in traffic," adds Singh.

The price range of the car begins at ₹ 7.49 lakh and it comes with a 1.5 litre, 4 cylinder engine with a company-claimed mileage of 16 kms per litre.

With cruise control, MP3 compatible CD/tuner, remote central-locking and immobilizer, rear under-seat storage, seven cup holders and tilt-adjustable steering column, the basic City model is packed with a lot of accessories.

Divyansha Mahendra, customer relations manager, Courtesy Honda, says, "Durability and safety have always been key features of the City." Honda provides three free services after the sale of a car. "Free road-side assistance was a part of the after-sales service at Honda but it is chargeable now," adds Mahendra.

The latest City variant can go from 0 to 100 kmph in just under 12 seconds - so the motor-heads cannot blame the company for focusing only on comfort and luxury. This baby can do a lot more.



PARAMETERS SCALE: 0-1000

| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10 |
|--------------|--------------|-----------------|---------------|--------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------|-------------|---------------|
| HONDA ACCORD | MARUTI SWIFT | CHEVROLET OPTRA | COROLLA ALTIS | SKODA SUPERB | MAHINDRA XYLO | CHEVROLET SPARK | FORD FIGO | SKODA LAURA | TOYOTA INNOVA |
| 890 | 880 | 878 | 874 | 869 | 863 | 862 | 860 | 858 | 856 |
| 927 | 890 | 905 | 903 | 891 | 906 | 883 | 894 | 877 | 892 |
| 892 | 870 | 887 | 892 | 838 | 871 | 835 | 825 | 838 | 856 |
| 889 | 884 | 866 | 884 | 870 | 851 | 870 | 851 | 848 | 851 |
| 885 | 873 | 876 | 861 | 880 | 854 | 845 | 835 | 876 | 827 |
| 877 | 869 | 875 | 873 | 875 | 861 | 848 | 858 | 849 | 854 |
| 871 | 880 | 869 | 889 | 862 | 841 | 871 | 882 | 891 | 860 |
| 911 | 883 | 888 | 847 | 879 | 860 | 866 | 884 | 881 | 840 |
| 878 | 887 | 872 | 884 | 844 | 881 | 895 | 852 | 867 | 867 |
| 865 | 876 | 872 | 820 | 876 | 827 | 835 | 843 | 812 | 834 |

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HERE ARE RANK ONE CARS SEGMENT-WISE: A2, A3, A4, A5 AND SUV/MUV RESPECTIVELY

A WINNER FROM THE GENERAL MOTORS' STABLE

1 **CHEVY OPTRA**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.6 P/2.0 D
PRICE 7.36-9.36 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.5 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

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Optra debuted as the 'new name of luxury' in 2003, but in its current form, the Optra Magnum, it promises to be 'powered to take over the road'. Snazzy taglines and curved corners are not the only factors setting this stylish sedan apart. While the 120 bhp, 2.0 litre engine appeals to car buffs, the submarine seats and extra leg room are making ordinary travellers happy.

"I love the car. It gives me all the luxuries of a Civic for the price of a C-segment professional who has had his diesel Optra for more than three years.



STYLE AND SUBSTANCE, THIS CAR DELIVERS BOTH

1 **HONDA ACCORD**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 2.4/3.5 P
PRICE 19.60-26.97 LAKH
FUEL ECO 12.88/10.7 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

HT Correspondent
hitesh@hindustantimes.com

night. But the Accord makes me look respectable without being too ostentatious. The Accord makes a statement without trying too hard."

It is the top of the line offering in India from a company that has established itself as the benchmark for design, style and quality. "The typical Accord customer is a seasoned companion, who has seen and driven many cars," says Atul Aggarwal, managing director, Classic Honda. "He recognises quality and is not overawed by the frills offered by other cars. Many people come looking for a Civic but end up buying an Accord as it is such a compelling product."

Honda cars are often criticised for being over-priced in their segments. That is one predicament the Accord never faced. True, there are cars like the Sonata and Superb that are priced competitively and offer more features. But customers like Ranjan see the Accord in the same league as a Mercedes and BMW, that are priced much more.

"My car maintenance comes at a fraction of the cost of what my friends, who have Mercedes and BMWs, pay," Ranjan adds. "If I buy another car, it would definitely be the next generation Accord," he says.



BENEATH A BOXY EXTERIOR, A UTILITARIAN'S DELIGHT

1 **M&M XYLO**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 2.5 D
PRICE 7.16 - 9.42 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.3 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 8

Nisheeth Upadhyay
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interiors would be filmy but that's not true. All this made me choose Xylo over Innova."

With a 2.49 litre engine that produces 112 bhp power, the Xylo comes in four variants and ten attractive colours. All the variants are equipped with the same engine; they are different only in terms of accessories and comfort. "The car met my expectations on most counts - the suspension was good, it was really spacious and it had some really nice features like paddle lamps, follow-me-home lights, etc," says Singh.

Mahindra Xylo is a spacious vehicle and can seat eight adults comfortably. But, it lacks ample boot space. "The rear windshield does not offer a good view while reversing. A reverse camera is necessary for this vehicle," says Rohan, adding a rider. "The Xylo is doing well because people are able to relate to the Mahindra brand. It is an Indian company so definitely enjoys more loyalty. The low cost of maintenance and spare parts also works in our favour," says Satpal Arora, Senior Sales Manager, Concept Automobiles, Delhi.



EXECUTIVE SEDANS (A4)

1 **CHEVY OPTRA**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.6 P/2.0 D
PRICE 7.36-9.36 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.5 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

One issue with the Optra is its low ground clearance. Gupta, however, offers a different explanation. "The roads are the problem. Most cars in this segment have a ground clearance of 160-165 cm, so does the Optra," he says.



PREMIUM SEDANS (A5)

1 **HONDA ACCORD**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 2.4/3.5 P
PRICE 19.60-26.97 LAKH
FUEL ECO 12.88/10.7 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

HT Correspondent
hitesh@hindustantimes.com

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SUV/MUV

1 **M&M XYLO**

SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 2.5 D
PRICE 7.16 - 9.42 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.3 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 8

Nisheeth Upadhyay
nisheeth.upadhyay@hindustantimes.com

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THE BEST CARS IN INDIA RIDE ON JK TYRE



www.jktyre.com

user's choice

HINDUSTAN TIMES-MARS CAR SATISFACTION SURVEY

DO YOU KNOW? 18,02,251 Number of registered cars in Delhi in 2009, the highest in any state.

13,030 Number of cars sold by Nissan Motors in India in 2010.

36 percentage increase in sales of cars in the A5 segment last financial year.

9,66,447 number of cars sold by Maruti Suzuki in India between 2010 and 2011.

14.88 percentage fall in Fiat India's domestic sales in 2010-11.

SECOND OF TWO PARTS

consumerspeak

The biggest reason why I bought the SX4 was the tremendous package and high value-for-money that it offers.

MANISH AMBANI
VP, Aristo Human Solutions

The Accord makes me look respectable without being too ostentatious. Merces and BMWs are bought by people with money eager to make a statement.

SUBHASH RANJAN
Chartered Accountant

Spark is a really handy car. It has almost all the features available in a big segment car like Aveo. I am willing to go to a hired people and tell them how good it is.

SUNIL MALHOTRA
Sales Manager, Hero Honda

My job demands that I travel a lot. My Innova is the best. It is a stable, solid car that does not require much maintenance.

SATPAL CHAUDHARY
Businessman

Figos drives really smooth. I once asked my wife, 'Do you know I am driving at 140 kmph?' She couldn't tell at all!

DILIP KRISHNAN NAIR
Lieutenant Colonel

Cruising to the top in style

CHART TOPPERS In part 2 of the HT-MarS car satisfaction survey, we take a look at top ranked cars across five segments- from compact cars to premium sedans.

top 5 COMPACT (A2)

This is the biggest automobile segment in India comprising 73% of all cars sold in the country. All small cars barring the Nano and Maruti 800 fall under this category. This segment has grown at a red-hot 28% in 2010-11 and is witnessing the maximum number of new launches. The upwardly mobile consumerist classes are looking for a car-be it the first car for their college going daughter or a young professional's membership to the car-owners' club. This segment captures a million dreams, though the overall satisfaction scores have much room for improvement. We featured the segment topper, the Maruti Swift, yesterday. Here is a look at the remaining cars in the top five.

PARAMETERS SCALE: 0-1000

TOTAL SATISFACTION

| | 1 MARUTI SWIFT | 2 CHEVROLET SPARK | 3 FORD FIGO | 4 CHEVROLET BEAT | 5 VW POLO |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|----------------------|----------------|---------------------|--------------|
| ENGINE | 890 | 883 | 894 | 866 | 837 |
| TRANSMISSION | 870 | 835 | 825 | 810 | 827 |
| STEERING/SUSPENSION/BREAKS | 884 | 870 | 851 | 838 | 844 |
| INSTRUMENT PANEL & CONTROLS | 873 | 845 | 835 | 851 | 824 |
| INTERIOR DESIGN & COMFORT | 869 | 848 | 858 | 849 | 823 |
| AIRCONDITIONING | 880 | 871 | 882 | 842 | 820 |
| SEATS | 883 | 866 | 884 | 811 | 827 |
| EXTERIOR DESIGN & STYLING | 887 | 895 | 852 | 871 | 829 |
| COST OF OWNERSHIP | 876 | 835 | 843 | 834 | 815 |

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A WINNER FROM CHEVY WITH A 'SPARK' IN ITS STEP

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The car that is "full of life" has been infusing joy in the Chevrolet family since 2007. More than 34,500 Sparks were sold in March 2010-April 2011, 5,000 more than the number of Volkswagen Polos sold in the same period. "The Spark's performance is unparalleled," says Renukh R. Pillai, Brand Head of Trident Automobiles in Bangalore. According to him, 30 lakh Sparks are running globally, which makes it a firecracker from the Chevrolet stable.

Sunil Malhotra, 47, a sales manager at Hero Honda in Delhi, bought his Spark in 2009. Having a technical bent of mind, he was impressed by the car.

"The test drive made my day. I was thinking of buying the i10, but the Spark has a digital trip meter and tachometer and when I took it for a spin, I instantly settled on it. It is a wonderful smooth ride." The small car tag doesn't bother

2 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.0 P/1.0 LPG
PRICE 3.06-4.36 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.5 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

him either. "It has all the features of a big segment car."

Chevrolet's three-year/one lakh kilometers warranty has strengthened the Spark's prospects. For the environmentally-conscious buyer, it has an LPG option as well. With an engine that maximizes on power and torque at low speeds, the effortless driving of this car in city traffic indeed reinstates Chevrolet's 'drive home a relationship' tagline.



A CONSERVATIVE EXTERIOR WITH A SPACIOUS INTERIOR

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When the Ford Figo was launched in March 2010, industry-watchers anticipated that it would be a game changer for the company. A small car was crucial for Ford to navigate the choppy waters of the Indian car market. Ford's gamble seems to have paid off. It sold more than 10,000 Figo's in January, 2011.

"I was going to buy the i20 but my move to Ford Figo has been smooth. For the kind of services Figo gives, I would have had to pay almost ₹ 3 lakh extra for another brand," says Lt. Col. Dilip Krishnan Nair, who bought his Figo over a year ago.

Ford Figo was the superstar of Indian cars in 2010, rounding up the auto industry honours. It was also chosen as the 'Indian Car of the Year 2010' by a jury of automobile experts. "The Figo's spacious interiors have earned a

3 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.2 P/1.4 D
PRICE 3.76-5.67 LAKH
FUEL ECO 15.6/18 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

resounding thumbs-up from the consumers. "They introduced it as a small car but it isn't. The boot space is almost as big as the Honda City. The people in the back seat are as comfortable as the ones in front," says Nair.

Figo owner Rajeev Menon, a Regional Coordinator at Volvo, who lives in Mayur Vihar, Delhi, is a fan of the car's gear changing system. "The AC cools very well but, I would like to see the Figo improve on the mileage," he says.



THE TALE OF A BRIGHT, YOUNG AND UP'BEAT' CAR

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The Chevrolet Beat zipped across the Indian roads in 2010, tipping General Motors' annual sales in India over the 10,00,000 mark the next year. The advertisements featured a grasshopper-green model with a tagline that said, "Plan Ahead." As petrol prices sky rocket, the company seems to have planned ahead by launching a diesel version this July.

Vivek Singh, a customer care manager with Apex Auto in Gurgaon says, "The enquiries for the diesel variant have increased tremendously in the past few months. Most people in this segment want to shift to diesel alternatives now."

The Beat has certainly added style to the Indian hatchback segment. With its crisp lines, sleek front and sporty black spoiler, the car scores high

4 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.2 P
PRICE 3.5-5.5 LAKH
FUEL ECO 18.6 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

on the style quotient. The Beat's looks were the main reason why Sadiya Aftab, 22, a student, bought it. "I thought it suited my own look- bright, young and fun."

One downside is the resale value. "The resale value is lower than other cars in the same segment," says Chevrolet dealer Sunil Kumar of Regent Automobiles. Despite this, the Beat is a hard car to beat.



THE PEDIGREED POLO WHIZZES ONTO INDIAN ROADS

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The Polo was introduced globally for the first time in 1975 and has been a stalwart in the Volkswagen stable ever since. Launched in India in 2010, this strongly built European car easily won over people's hearts in the country.

"Polo's design is clean and stylish and its performance and driving experience have been really good," says Ankit Tripathi, an MBA student in Pune.

The fuel efficiency is almost the same as claimed by the company. "I am getting about 12 kms per litre with A/C always on. This translates to Rs. 5/km fuel expense," adds Tripathi.

A large boot and sufficient rear legroom make the car comfortable. Also, the quality of upholstery and plastics is good. "The suspensions are really good so driving on bad roads is smooth," he adds.

There have,

5 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.2 P/1.6 P/1.2 D
PRICE 4.6-7.1 LAKH
FUEL ECO 17.2/17.2/21.07 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

however, been complaints of engine noise and excessive vibrations in the basic model. Mr Binny, customer relations manager, Bhasin Motors, Delhi, says, "Customers say that the engine makes a lot of noise but that's just a sports feature of the car which they are not used to."

According to him, Volkswagen also gives three years of free after-sale service to Polo customers.



YESTERDAY

Top-ten cars across segments.
Honda Accord bags top honours.
Swift, City, Optra and Xylo top the charts in their respective segments.

correction

In part 1 of the survey on September 6, a quote was incorrectly attributed to Suzuki Motors CEO O. Suzuki. The quote was from Shinzo Nakamishi, MD and CEO of Maruti Suzuki. We regret the error.

Spotted an error in Hindustan Times? You can alert us of any errors in the paper by e-mailing htreporter@hindustantimes.com. Our mailing address is: Hindustan Times House, B-20, Kasturba Gandhi Marg, New Delhi-110001. We will be happy to correct ourselves.

expertspeak

Miles ahead of the competition

TOYOTA INNOVA

The sheer 'bullet proof' reliability of the Toyota power train has made the Innova the unchallenged leader. Its competitors such as the Tata Sumo, M&M Bolero and Chevrolet Tavera look crude and cheap. It is so spacious, comfortable and economical that many families are using it as a personal car. The Innova's solid utilitarian value has made many customers overlook its rather staid styling. Many also appreciate how safe it is at high speeds on long distance travels.



MURAD ALI BAIG
Automotive expert, Freelance journalist

Performance and dynamics blend together

FORD FIGO

The reason why the Ford Figo has caught the fancy of an average Indian middle class family is that it's affordable. It is a fine blend of performance and dynamics. Both petrol and diesel versions are fun to drive. The interiors are roomy and practical, though the quality could have been better. The Figo design is not radical or futuristic, but it is definitely pleasing to the eye. With an engine capacity of more than 1 litre, customers feel that they have bought a small car with a big heart.



P. THARYAN
Editor, Motown India / Car N Style

Refinement and reliability define this car

COROLLA ALTIS

The Corolla is the benchmark of fuss-free motoring. A comfortable back seat and a peppy engine is what makes it appealing. Compared to other cars in the segment, the Corolla isn't as luxurious or exciting but its user-friendly nature and utter reliability has made it popular. The 1.8 L engine is pretty swift. It is easy to drive in the city thanks to the engine and nimble handling. The 1.8 diesel engine, though quite sluggish, offers good economy.



HORMAZD SORABJEE
Editor, Autocar India

top 5 ENTRY LEVEL SEDANS (A3)

A wide ranging category that consists of affordable sedans like Maruti Swift Dzire, Hyundai Accent and Toyota Etios to the more fancy ones like Honda Civic, Hyundai Verna and Ford Fiesta. It is the second largest segment in India with a share of 18.4% of total car sales. Last year, it grew faster than small cars at over 32%. People in their late 20s and 30s with a young family and in need of bigger cars buy into this segment. While Honda City tops this segment again, the Maruti SX4 records a big jump to number two.

PARAMETERS SCALE: 0-1000

| | 1 HONDA CITY | 2 MARUTI SX4 | 3 CHEVY AVEO | 4 SWIFT DZIRE | 5 FORD FIESTA |
|-----------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL SATISFACTION | 856 | 852 | 847 | 829 | 822 |
| ENGINE | 870 | 875 | 836 | 844 | 847 |
| TRANSMISSION | 828 | 869 | 837 | 832 | 830 |
| STEERING/SUSPENSION/BREAKS | 869 | 851 | 845 | 820 | 818 |
| INSTRUMENT PANEL & CONTROLS | 852 | 855 | 877 | 824 | 808 |
| INTERIOR DESIGN & COMFORT | 842 | 843 | 844 | 845 | 818 |
| AIRCONDITIONING | 872 | 854 | 841 | 834 | 833 |
| SEATS | 855 | 854 | 783 | 863 | 818 |
| EXTERIOR DESIGN & STYLING | 868 | 851 | 903 | 833 | 820 |
| COST OF OWNERSHIP | 846 | 827 | 851 | 780 | 804 |

top 3 EXECUTIVE SEDANS (A4)

This segment is the stepping stone to luxury vehicles in the country and consists of cars such as Honda Civic, Toyota Corolla Altis and Volkswagen Jetta. It accounts for less than 3% of the overall market and is growing at a lower 12% growth rate. People with easy money looking to differentiate themselves from the motley crowd and the nouveau-riche comprise its buyers.

| | 1 CHEVY OPTRA | 2 COROLLA ALTIS | 3 SKODA LAURA |
|-----------------------------|------------------|--------------------|------------------|
| TOTAL SATISFACTION | 878 | 874 | 858 |
| ENGINE | 905 | 903 | 877 |
| TRANSMISSION | 887 | 892 | 838 |
| STEERING/SUSPENSION/BREAKS | 866 | 884 | 848 |
| INSTRUMENT PANEL & CONTROLS | 876 | 861 | 876 |
| INTERIOR DESIGN & COMFORT | 875 | 873 | 849 |
| AIRCONDITIONING | 869 | 889 | 891 |
| SEATS | 888 | 847 | 881 |
| EXTERIOR DESIGN & STYLING | 872 | 884 | 867 |
| COST OF OWNERSHIP | 872 | 820 | 812 |



top 3 PREMIUM SEDANS (A5)

The top of the lot, this is the domain of the Merces, BMWs and Audis that requires the best from the likes of Honda, Toyota, Skoda and Volkswagen to be considered in the same frame. The low affordability of these cars means that it accounts for less than 1% of all cars. But, this is a fast growing segment with a 36% jump in sales in 2010-11. Strictly for the seriously rich.

| | 1 HONDA ACCORD | 2 SKODA SUPERB | 3 HYUNDAI SONATA |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|---------------------|
| TOTAL SATISFACTION | 890 | 869 | 855 |
| ENGINE | 927 | 891 | 874 |
| TRANSMISSION | 892 | 838 | 850 |
| STEERING/SUSPENSION/BREAKS | 889 | 870 | 851 |
| INSTRUMENT PANEL & CONTROLS | 885 | 880 | 846 |
| INTERIOR DESIGN & COMFORT | 877 | 875 | 854 |
| AIRCONDITIONING | 871 | 862 | 829 |
| SEATS | 911 | 879 | 870 |
| EXTERIOR DESIGN & STYLING | 878 | 844 | 880 |
| COST OF OWNERSHIP | 865 | 876 | 818 |



top 5 SUV/MUV

Traditionally a segment only for the commercially oriented, it has witnessed a sea-change in the last decade. Large families and larger incomes have drawn people to this category of vehicles that ranges from a Bolero, Innova to a Tata Sumo. It accounts for a 12% share of all passenger vehicles sold in the country and a large chunk of its customers come from the hinterland.

| | 1 M&M XLYO | 2 TOYOTA INNOVA | 3 M&M SCORPIO | 4 TATA SAFARI | 5 M&M BOLERO |
|-----------------------------|---------------|--------------------|------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| TOTAL SATISFACTION | 863 | 856 | 848 | 842 | 825 |
| ENGINE | 906 | 892 | 862 | 894 | 886 |
| TRANSMISSION | 871 | 856 | 815 | 881 | 892 |
| STEERING/SUSPENSION/BREAKS | 851 | 851 | 842 | 847 | 828 |
| INSTRUMENT PANEL & CONTROLS | 854 | 827 | 838 | 826 | 787 |
| INTERIOR DESIGN & COMFORT | 861 | 854 | 829 | 840 | 781 |
| AIRCONDITIONING | 841 | 860 | 864 | 852 | 829 |
| SEATS | 860 | 840 | 896 | 809 | 812 |
| EXTERIOR DESIGN & STYLING | 881 | 867 | 851 | 803 | 806 |
| COST OF OWNERSHIP | 827 | 834 | 828 | 819 | 788 |

STANDING ALONE, STANDING TALL?

As the lone car in its segment, the Tata Nano arrived in March 2009. In a shower of hype and epithets. It was dubbed the 'people's car' and 'small wonder', but most importantly, it was the 'World's Cheapest Car'. With a price tag of ₹ 1,00,000 (ex-showroom price ₹ 1,40,880, New Delhi) - the lowest in the world - the Nano promised millions of middle class families a car within their reach. But the fairytale story ran into hurdles. Despite massive bookings, production delays and safety concerns affected the car's image and sales.

Two years on, it appears that the people's car has fallen short of the sky-high customer expectations. The Nano scored a total of 798 points in the survey, while the industry average across all other segments is much higher at 828 points. This is not surprising, considering that it is an ultra cheap no-frills car, shorn of all the niceties. Yet, the low satisfaction scores indicate that the middle class is aspiring for something more, something better. The Nano's affordability still remains a magical draw, though safety concerns need to be addressed. As the number of these canary-yellow cars rises, a Nano revolution might just be around the corner.

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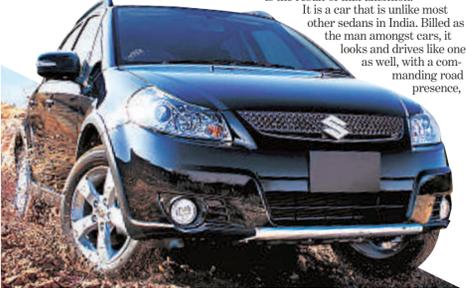
THIS OFFERING FROM MARUTI IS A POWER-PACKED RIDE

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Love it or hate it, but you just can't ignore it. At least if it is India and the car is a Maruti.

The superlative success of the Swift developed a new ambition and confidence in Maruti to punch above its weight and target bigger cars. The SX4 is the result of that ambition.

It is a car that is unlike most other sedans in India. Billed as the man amongst cars, it looks and drives like one as well, with a commanding road presence.



2 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.6 P/1.3 D
PRICE 7-9 LAKH
FUEL ECO 15/21.5 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

powerful engine and high ground clearance. The car is also loaded with features and is priced in a way only Maruti can.

"The biggest reason why I bought this car was the tremendous package and the high value-for-money that it offers," says Manish Ambwani, 33, vice president at HR consultancy firm Aristo Human Solutions. "The car is powerful, has a lot of space and high ground clearance. Also I have always owned a Maruti so I was waiting for a car like this."

Maruti's known expertise at offering the low-priced sales and service became a key differentiator in a cost-conscious Indian market. Though the Honda City, that tops the segment in this survey, remained the market leader, SX4 literally eliminated the others like Ford Fiesta and Chevrolet Aveo.

Launched with a new diesel engine earlier this year, it looks set to scale greater heights.

HIGH ON COMFORT, LOW ON MAINTENANCE

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Ashwin Goel, 31, went to the US for the first time in 2007. During that trip, he was chauffeured around in a Toyota Corolla taxi, so much so that by the time he returned to India six months later, he had made up his mind to buy the car for himself.

"I travelled in many Corollas



2 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.6 P/2.0 D
PRICE 8.0-11.4 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.14/13.7 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

there and found them to be comfortable, reliable and sturdy," says. "I bought the new Corolla Altis in December 2008 and it is a completely no-nonsense workhorse and has never failed me."

With over 35 million Corollas on the roads worldwide, it is globally the largest selling car ever and one big reason why Toyota became the largest carmaker in the world. In India it was an early entrant in 2003 and so far over 70,000 cars have been sold. A typical Toyota car, it is recognised for its practicality, refined engine, space and rock bottom maintenance costs.

"I have serviced everything from a Morris to a BMW 5-series," says Mohd. Faizan, 63, who owns a garage in Delhi's Jama Masjid area. "We joke about the Altis that unless it meets with an accident, it will rarely require a part change."

SKODA'S SUCCESS FORMULA: LUXURY AT A BARGAIN

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The Skoda Superb is the elegant way to move. Drop the gear and the Superb shifts forward like a spaceship on afterburners—quiet and incredibly fast.

Vivek Aggarwal, a businessman based in NCR, loves the car.

"I am very happy



2 SPECIFICATION
ENGINE 1.8 P/2.0 D
PRICE 18.2-26.3 LAKH
FUEL ECO 13.14/13.7 KMPL
NO OF SEATS 5

with the looks and performance. I had an Accord before this and it's steering was not as responsive or smooth," he says.

The controls and gadgets are logically placed and easy to operate. "This car is full of gadgets like the massive, full-colour touch screen on the centre console. The geek in me made me buy Aggarwal adds. Priced between ₹ 18-26 lakh, this five-seater sedan is currently the largest and most luxurious model in Skoda's lineup.

Although the car is known to have comfortable interiors, Mr Anand Kapoor, a realtor, has complaints. "I bought the Superb in 2009 and started facing problems with the air conditioning soon after. The car spent a lot of time in the workshop."

However, Mr Aggarwal has a solution to this problem. "Push the accelerator, wait for the turbo to kick in and watch your complaints disappear," he says.

COMFORT AND CLASS WITH ENOUGH ROOM TO SPARE

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The Innova, Toyota's hugely successful multi-utility vehicle, came as a replacement to the equally successful but dated Qualis in early 2005. Till then