

TOYOTA INNOVA CRYSTA 15 YEARS AT THE TOP



AUTOCAR
INDIA

A SPECIAL PROJECT FOR TOYOTA KIRLOSKAR MOTOR

SIMPLY INVINCIBLE

Since its launch in 2005, the Toyota Innova, and later the Crysta, has been the unchallenged king of the MPV segment. Here's how the story unfolded.



MICHAEL JACKSON. THE West Indies cricket team of the 1980s. Imperial Rome. When it comes to dominating one's sphere of influence, nothing betters the abovementioned examples. And if you are talking about automobiles specific to India, one doesn't have to look beyond the Toyota Innova Crysta. The Innova and its successor, the Crysta, have sold a total of about 9 lakh units since Toyota launched the MPV 15 years ago, and the MPV has ridden roughshod over every manner of competition that it has encountered. Not surprisingly, the Innova had a lot going for it right from Day 1, starting with the simple but immensely significant fact that it is

a Toyota. But that is not the only reason for its incredible hold over the MPV segment in India. Let's take a look at the Toyota Innova story that is as much about setting a gold standard as it is about creating and building a powerful legacy.

THE GENESIS

The Toyota Innova made its global debut in towards the end of 2004. It was based on the company's new IMV or Innovative Multi-Purpose Vehicle platform and one of five models that went on sale in over 140 countries. India was integral to the IMV project that relied on global production and supply bases that

The Innova Crysta (above) was launched in 2016, and the next year Toyota upped the luxe quotient further with the Touring Sport



are all outside Japan to source vehicles and components. Bookings for the Innova in Indonesia, where it was first launched, numbered in a single day; back in India, the response was as enthusiastic and the enthusiasm still hasn't waned one bit. In its very first year in the country, the Innova, which was launched in early 2005, registered sales of over 36,000 units, and found a place in the top 10 passenger vehicle models sold in India in 2005-06. On its launch, the car was offered with a choice of a 2.0-litre VVT-I petrol motor and a 2.5-litre D-4D diesel engine. In the next ten years, until 2015, Toyota would go



Role Models: The Innova through the years

2005



2012



2009



2014



Toyota launched the Innova on February 24, 2005 with a choice of a 2.0-litre VVT-I petrol and a 2.5-litre D-4D diesel engines. In 2009, the manufacturer made a few significant changes, including the addition of an intercooler, and cosmetically, a new chin and grille were added. Power and torque figures for the engine remained unchanged, though. The MUV got its second facelift in 2012, and with it came a new bumper, grille, new headlights and newly designed alloy wheels too. On the inside, the Innova got steering-mounted controls for the audio and a climate control system as options. This iteration of the Innova registered

record annual sales of 75,911 units. The 2014 model looked very similar to the 2012 iteration, but a larger grille was added and there were minor revisions to the front and rear bumpers. Two airbags were offered as standard across all variants. 2016, of course, saw the launch of the new generation Innova - the Crysta - and the rest, as they say, is history. In January this year, Toyota opened bookings for the BS6 version of the Innova Crysta. The BS-6 compliant version of the Innova Crysta will feature Selective Catalytic Reduction (SCR) technology as well as a Diesel Particulate Filter (DPF).

on to sell over half a million units of the car. The numbers tell the whole story, of course. In 2006, a year after its launch, the Innova sold 72,130 units. Other sterling years included 2012 (75911), 2013 (61,184), and 2014 (59447).

THE SPECIAL ONE

What is it that made - and still makes - the Innova special and so much in demand? Well, reason one is simple enough: we are talking about a Toyota here, so trust among consumers was never a problem. Toyota's cars have long been regarded as benchmarks of quality and premiumness. And back in its first decade in India, the Innova didn't let down its innumerable buyers. It had a smooth, uncluttered shape, with sharply raked A-pillars, large sweptback headlights and a prominent grille. Its

low, wide proportions and rounded contours helped it look better and more purposeful than any of its competitors. Add to that, the plethora of features it came with and the attention to quality, and it was no surprise that the Innova, in its original avatar, ruled the MPV segment for over ten straight years. When it finally made way, it was to its predecessor, the Crysta.

TAKING THE LEGACY FORWARD

Among the most impressive things with the original Innova is that, during its over a decade-long reign as India's MPV king, it required very few changes. Between 2005 and 2014, the Toyota Innova saw the addition of an intercooler, and about three facelifts along with interior updates. Marketing and brand experts termed it as a 'made for India' car that found



THE STORY IN NUMBERS

2005

Toyota launches the Innova in India

36,000 +

Number of units sold in the Innova's first year in India

2016

Toyota launches the Innova Crysta

7,259

Number of Innova Crystas sold in the first month of launch

The Innova Crysta rolls out of the Toyota Kirloskar Motor's plant in Bidadi, near Bangalore

favour with everyone from families to fleet owners. As regards competition, the car had - and still has - many formidable rivals, but the Innova's domination is so complete that a number of them have now fallen by the wayside.

2016 saw the launch of the new Innova and this time it was suffixed with 'Crysta'. Those who saw and drove the car four years ago knew at once that Toyota had taken the game even further with the new generation Innova. The Crysta is, for all practical purposes, no longer a conventional MPV. With an arsenal of features, reliable, powerful engines, lashings of luxury, the Innova Crysta now has big SUVs and executive sedans in its sight. And why not? After all, here is a car that has created a new paradigm for space, comfort, and luxury. The Crysta sports, among others, a contemporary infotainment system that dials in sat nav, detailed fuel and trip computer and a rear-view camera. There are several other attributes that enhance the experience of being in a Crysta or driving one, namely, strips of LED ambient lighting on the ceiling, felt-lined door pads, dedicated - and electronically controlled - air vents for second and third rows, and, as options, one-touch operated power windows on all four doors, keyless entry, electric adjustment for the driver's seat and automatic headlamps. In the very first month of its launch - in May 2016, the Innova Crysta sold an impressive 7,259 units. And in the past three and a half years, it has over 2.7 lakh units, and has a market share of about 40% in its segment. In January this year, Toyota opened bookings for the BSVI-compliant Innova Crysta last month, and the car is set to drive in confidently into a new era.



QUOTE, UNQUOTE

How the Toyota Innova has fared in the pages of Autocar India over the years



“Toyota is going for the kill with this modern, comfy and hugely refined MPV.
From First Drive, Autocar India, October 2004



“As a product, the Innova's superiority is beyond reproach and proof of how thoroughly engineered Toyotas can be. The build quality both inside and out and the brilliant dynamics makes it easy and the most 'car-like' to drive.
From Comparison Test, Autocar India, March 2009

“No car has ruled its segment with as much impunity as the Toyota Innova... Rivals have come and failed miserably, unable to make any dent on the Innova's popularity... What's amazing is that Toyota has been able to hike the Innova's price by more than 70 percent over the years and it still sells more than all its rivals combined. Clearly, the Innova is seen to be as much of an investment as it is a car.
From Game Changers of the Indian Automotive Market, autocarindia.com, December 2014



“... What really tips the scales in its [Innova Crysta's] favour is the quality, reliability and dependability that are part and parcel of the Toyota experience.
From Comparison Test, June 2017



“...High speed corners are tackled with plenty of confidence. There is a bit of body roll, but apart from that, the new Innova tracks true and provides the driver plenty of confidence - and that's something that will be appreciated on our increasingly faster highways.
From Test Drive, Autocar India, February 2016.



“Arguably, the most successful Indian passenger vehicle of the 21st century, the Innova has crushed all competition to stay the unchallenged king of the MPV segment... Why it commands such incredible loyalty is obvious. There is simply no other MPV that is quite as good.
From Road Test, Autocar India, July 2016



THE TOYOTA WAY

Toyota is the most admired car brand in the world. Here's why

BUILT TO LAST

It all starts with the customer. Toyota believes that it must respond to its customer's needs in terms of product quality, service and driving experience. This belief has led to the 'Built on QDR' (Quality, Durability, and Reliability) principle, which in turn is connected to its global philosophy of continuous improvement. Quality, Durability, and Reliability for Toyota also applies to every single component of its cars. To that end, it has designed a production system that ensures no compromise. Toyota believes in Jidoka, or building quality into the production system and ensuring that damaged parts do not proceed to the next stage. The Toyota Production System (TPS) also follows a lean manufacturing method called Just In Time (JIT) where it makes what is needed, when it is needed, and only in the required quantity. That way, it brings down warehousing and production costs while ensuring excellent quality at every stage of the process.

Toyota also believes in supporting its partners. It knows that building the perfect car requires perfect components. So, it ensures that its suppliers are innovative, capable, and cost-effective. Toyota treats its partners as equal stakeholders. It understands that a sustainable future is only possible with teamwork.

ECO FOCUS

Minimum input, maximum output. Toyota's Eco-factory has been designed to be an example of sustainable manufacturing practices. From its energy-efficient servo press to the state-of-the-art global body line, Toyota has improved energy efficiency at every stage. Its paints are water-based, and there's also a water recycling system that cycles 40% wastewater back into the process. This process not only helps

Toyota become an efficient manufacturer but also contribute to a greener society.

COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS

Toyota's contributions to sustainability don't end there. It promotes environmental awareness among employees to make them better citizens. It also directly involves them in afforestation, environment month promotion and eco CSR activities to help employees build meaningful relationships with the environment. Its 'Eco-Kaizen' idea is to improve continuously to minimise environmental impact. This includes developing and using innovative technology, and planning and optimisation of resources that reduce its carbon footprint.

FUTURE FOCUS

Toyota understands that its most valuable assets are its employees. It strives to create an environment where each employee can trust and deliver their best for the organisation. Toyota also wants to ensure that every future employee is a capable and responsible citizen. To that end, it has set up the Toyota Technical Training Institute (TTTI), a state-of-the-art residential facility that offers a full-time 3-year course on automobile technology and skilled manufacturing. The course is provided free of cost to talented students who otherwise may not have been able to pursue higher education. Toyota also conducts various technical education and safety education programs to promote skill enhancement and safety awareness among children in multiple cities. It also reaches out to underprivileged students to conduct environmental conservation awareness and hand out books and school bags. Toyota believes that it has a responsibility towards its community. Its aim is simply to be a socially responsible citizen.

THE CRYSTA IS, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, NO LONGER A CONVENTIONAL MPV. WITH AN ARSENAL OF FEATURES, RELIABLE, POWERFUL ENGINES, LASHINGS OF LUXURY, THE INNOVA CRYSTA NOW HAS BIG SUVs AND EXECUTIVE SEDANS IN ITS SIGHT.

