

ONE IN EVERY TWO CARS SOLD IN INDIA IS PAINTED WHITE

Riot of Colours to Live in, Lighter Hue to Drive Out

Ease of maintenance, good resale value and hot Indian weather too contribute to the popularity of lighter shades

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New Delhi: India's famed love affair with colours that are bright and loud fades away when its citizens make the choice while buying their cars.

Indians seem to prefer lighter colours for their machines, with one in every two cars sold in the country painted in white and over a quarter of the buyers opting silver or grey shades.

"Any customer can have a car painted any colour that he wants so long as it is black," Henry Ford, the Ford Motor founder, had famously said. Few in India seem to heed; just 4% of them bought a Ford or any other car painted in the colour that personifies elegance in 2013.

"As per the current sales trend for Honda Cars, white, silver and urban titanium continue to be the favourite colours of choice for our customers," said Jnanes-

war Sen, senior vice-president of marketing and sales at the Indian unit of the Japanese auto maker.

He cited ease of maintenance, good value in the second-hand market and hot Indian weather conditions

— for instance, black cars become too hot inside if parked in the sun — as some of the reasons for the colour preference of Indians. Brighter options have slightly higher premium, which may be forcing some to look the other way

Red is preferred slightly more than black at 7%. Red along with the maroon shade together accounted for 11% of the total 2013 cars sales.

The northern part of the country is more biased towards white, with 66% of

the cars sold in the region being painted in that colour, according to a study by marketing information services firm JD Power.

In the south, white accounts for 34%. south and west have slightly more acceptance for brighter colours like red and its maroon shade with 13% of the buyers choosing these colours. In eastern India, about 14% of new cars sold are painted red or maroon.

The choice of colour also marginally depends on the segment of the vehicle. As much as 61% of buyers in the luxury segment choose white. The luxury segment has the highest share of buyers opting black too, at 12%.

Bright colours have more acceptance when it comes to car interiors.

"Indian customers have varied preferences which are largely towards brighter interiors and there is an increased preference to two-tone interiors," said Rakesh

Srivastava, senior vice-president at Hyundai Motor India. "Some also like exclusive black or beige interior."

According to luxury carmaker Audi India, earlier there was a marked preference for cars in either white or black, but now customers increasingly explore new options.

White, grey and silver have more takers in the auto maker's range of luxury sedans. Red is the preferred choice for the R8, RS7, RS5, S6, S4 and TT range of Audi sports cars.

Red is increasingly being liked by the young customers of Mercedes-Benz, too. "In India, the popular colour preferences are white, black and silver. Red is also a colour many customers, especially the younger ones, prefer," the local unit of German luxury-vehicle maker Daimler said in an email, responding to questions on the choice it customers usually make.

Paint Me White

White-coloured cars sold **66%** in north and **35%** in south

South and west have more acceptance for colours like red and maroon with **13%**

61% in the luxury segment and **57%** in the mid-size segment buy white

Luxury segment has the highest share of buyers opting black at **12%**

Red and maroon accounted for 11% of the total cars sales in 2013

Eastern India's 14% of new cars sold are painted red or maroon

More takers of white, grey and silver in Audi's range of luxury sedans

Red is the preferred choice for Audi's R8, RS7, RS5, S6, S4 and TT range of sports cars

Young Mercedes-Benz customers also prefer red

