

Maruti Suzuki hopes all-new Swift will recharge hatchbacks

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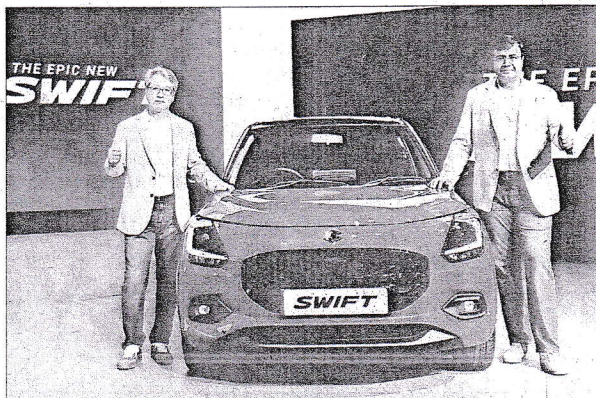
MARUTI SUZUKI, THE country's largest passenger vehicle manufacturer, is pinning hopes on the all-new Swift to recharge the hatchback segment, which has been losing share to SUVs of late.

From a high of 47.5% in FY18, the market share of hatchbacks has been dropping.

"The hatchback segment has been under pressure, and its market share has been reducing," Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, marketing & sales, Maruti Suzuki India, told *FE*.

"But the overall car market is growing, and in an expanding market there is room for all kinds of cars. The Swift belongs to the premium hatchback segment, which we believe will grow from the current about 700,000 units per year to about a million units by 2030."

Hatchbacks—a car body style with a rear door that swings upward—are classified as entry-level (Alto, S-Presso, Kwid) and premium (Swift,



Hisashi Takeuchi (left), MD & CEO, with Partho Banerjee, senior executive officer, marketing & sales, Maruti Suzuki India, during the launch of the all-new Swift on Thursday

Baleno, i20, Altroz, etc).

Banerjee said premium hatchbacks form 60% of total hatchback sales, and if there is a new launch in this segment, it will attract a lot of buyers from entry-level SUVs or sedans, and give a boost to hatchbacks.

The all-new Swift, launched on Thursday, priced from ₹6.49 lakh to ₹9.64 lakh, ex-showroom, competes not only with other premium hatch-

backs, but also with sub-4 metre SUVs such as Maruti Suzuki Brezza, Tata Nexon/Punch, Hyundai Exter/Venue, etc—a segment that has been growing consistently, and is today the biggest car body type by volume.

"The interest in hatchbacks hasn't waned," Banerjee said.

"We opened bookings of the all-new Swift on May 1, and have received more than 10,000 in just a week. It shows

that if there is a right product, it will attract customers."

The Swift, he added, is anyway selling well, and the all-new model will further enhance its appeal.

"It was the largest selling car in India in calendar year 2023," he said. "More than any SUV or hatchback."

Auto analysts attribute the success of the Swift—despite it being almost a 20-year-old nameplate—to its ageless design, low maintenance, and high fuel efficiency.

"The new Swift has been improved in every possible area," Banerjee said.

"It gets the all-new Z-Series 1.2-litre petrol engine, in which fuel efficiency of the manual gearbox variant has been improved by 10% (24.8 km/litre) and that of the AMT has been improved by 14% (25.75 km/litre). It's also far greener, with 12% lower carbon dioxide emissions than the previous model. It gets six airbags as standard. We call buyers of the Swift as the Swifters, most of whom are in their late 20s to early 30s."