

Design Resource

History of Automobile Design in India

Iconic Two Wheelers

by

Aman Nim and Prof. Ravi Poovaiah

IDC, IIT Bombay

Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/history-automobile-design-india>



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Evolution of Two Wheelers in India

Two wheelers were originally designed to offer safer, efficient and comfortable rides. They have come a long way since they first came into existence, while continuing to serve their purpose even today. This document explains various iconic two wheelers with their overall timeline in India and also how these vehicles have helped us in the evolution of two wheelers in India.

Two Wheelers: A Symbol of Pride

Royal Enfield Bullet was the first two wheeler in India being introduced but it was used by the military at first. Back then owning a two wheeler was a status and it was not considered as a mode of transportation. But this was changed in the 1970's when the market was opened for new companies like Yezdi and Rajdoot. Most youngsters are the only ones that are being affected by these new bikes and that's what made a new trend in the market at that time. Then at that time Bajaj also debuted in the market with "Chetak" which introduced a newer segment of two wheeler in India "scooters". Which was quite expensive at that time but it fulfills the dreams of common India to own a two wheeler. And despite the craze for these vehicles, and the obsession for status and pride was not wearing off that time. But this was a big shift from status of pride to more of use and convenience of the two wheeler.



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Two Wheelers: A Symbol of Convenience

In the 1980's there was evident growth in the two wheeler market in India and it was based on various partnerships done between Indian and foreign companies. Companies like Suzuki, Honda and Yamaha came into the India market and changed the whole two wheeler industry by providing much more advanced technology at that time. Now vehicles are more convenient and more fuel efficient and are affordable by a common Indian. Hero Honda joint venture was the one that has taken the market by flood when they introduced "Splendor" in the market and it has also opened a gate for the companies for newer segments of bike. And this trend has attracted a lot of Indian youth.



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Two Wheelers: A Confluence of Convenience and Style

This new trend was started when Bajaj returned to the market in 2001 with Pulsar which was more stylish and had more performance that never existed in the Indian market. At that time it had a fuel efficiency of a small segment bike and more impressive looks that made a deep impact on newer generations of bikes and a whole new market for Indians. In 2001 Honda also came up with the most beloved scooter in India "Activa". Activa took the market by a storm and became every Indian household vehicle and it also gave life to the dying scooter market in India. At that time India also witnessed a lot of higher performance bikes from Suzuki, Yamaha which has introduced newer segments in India. Though Royal Enfield has maintained its legacy but gets more competition from various international brands bike Harley Davidson and Triumph. Now the trend has shifted more toward stylish and performance oriented bikes.



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Design Evolution of Two Wheelers



Design Evolution of Royal Enfield Bullet



Design Evolution of Jawa Motorcycles in India



Design Evolution of Hero Honda Splendor



Design Evolution of Bajaj Discover



Design Evolution of Bajaj Pulsar



Design Evolution of Hero Honda CBZ

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Design Evolution of TVS Apache



Design Evolution of Hero Honda Karizma



Design Evolution of KTM Duke in India



Design Evolution of Yamaha YZF R - 15



Design Evolution of API Lambretta



Design Evolution of Bajaj Chetak



Design Evolution of Honda Activa

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Design Evolution of Royal Enfield Bullet

1939-Present

Royal Enfield is a multinational motorcycle manufacturing company that is also known as the oldest motorcycle manufacturing brand which still continues today. The company makes classic looking motorcycles including the Royal Enfield Bullet, Classic 350, Meteor 350, Classic 500, Thunderbird and also the most iconic Interceptor and Continental GT and many more. Royal Enfield also makes adventurous bikes like Himalayan and Bullet trials for motor enthusiasts. The most loved motorcycle in India is the Royal Enfield Bullet which was loved for its thump sound and overall classic looks.



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Royal Enfield Bullet Timeline



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Design Evolution of Jawa Motorcycles in India

1960 - 1996

2018 - Present

Ideal Jawa India Ltd based in Mysore was an Indian company which produced licensed Jawa motorcycles from 1960. Jawa motorcycles have a cult following present to this day. The most famous models in India are the Jawa 250 type 353/04, Jawa 350 Type 634 and Yezdi 250 deluxe but the company stopped its production in 1996. Then In 2016 Mahindra & Mahindra through its Classic Legends Private Limited signed a licensing deal to launch the motorcycles under the Jawa brand in India. In 2018 the brand launched three motorcycles in India that have design languages of an old Jawa and technology of the current vehicles at that time. These Bikes gave direct competition to 350cc Royal Enfields.



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Jawa Motorcycle Timeline



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Design Evolution of Hero Honda Splendor

1994 - Present

In the 1990's bikes were still considered for those who spent a lot of money. And people used to prefer a scooter for daily commuting as it was less expensive than a bike. Then 1994 Hero Honda came up with Splendor and changed the scenario of owning a bike. Splendor was the only bike at that time that was reliable, convenient, fuel efficient and the most important affordable bike in India, and it became the most loved bike by middle class families in India. And in the last 25 years we witnessed the evolution of splendor through introduction of different variants and technology.



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Hero Honda Splendor Timeline



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Design Evolution of Bajaj Discover

2004 - 2020

Bajaj Discover was a line of commuter bikes that was launched in 2004. The bike resembles a sleek design language and better performance as compared to various commuter bikes at that time. This model helped Bajaj to enter the lower segments of commuter bikes in India. In its production of 16 years we have witnessed major changes and overall design and also the DTSI technology of Bajaj. The bike was discontinued in 2020.



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Bajaj Discover Timeline



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Design Evolution of Bajaj Pulsar

2001 - Present

In 2001 Bajaj introduced a newer segment of bike which has changed the whole Indian two wheeler market, the bike was named as “Pulsar”. The pulsar created a new segment as “sports bike” in India which redefined motorcycle riding for youth. In the last two decades pulsar has grown to 10 models and become more muscular in style and also more powerful than before. In 2012 Pulsar got the major changes when Bajaj did a joint venture with KTM to boost its sports bike segment. The bike produced after the collaboration was Pulsar 200NS which resembles a more aggressive styling of the bike and also a newer engine which makes a pulsar unbeatable till today.



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Bajaj Pulsar Timeline



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Design Evolution of Hero Honda CBZ

1999 - Present

In the year 1999, Hero Honda gave the Indian market its first Indian-made 150 cc bike and it was named as “Hero Honda CBZ” which was way ahead of its competition and took the riding experience to a whole new level. The CBZ became every boy’s dream bike in 1999. The primary reason for its success was the aesthetic appeal of the bike which came from typical CBZ design language from Japan. And CBZ has also featured a twin pod instrument cluster which was also new at that time. The CBZ is now sold as a CBZ Xtreme by Hero moto corp with newer technology and more muscular styling.



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Hero Honda CBZ Timeline



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Design Evolution of TVS Apache

2005 - Present

In 2005, TVS racing, which has been dominant in racing for the last 38 years launched a bike that is still unmatched in terms of its performance. TVS Apache was made which provides a sheer performance that has dominated the sports bike segment in India. Over a million Apaches have been sold till now and the bike has found its place in a lot of motor enthusiasts not only in India but also around the world. In over a decade we have seen various variants of the Apache which defines racing pedigree. The recent model Apache RR310 was designed in collaboration with BMW Motorrad and it has become the fastest Apache ever.



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TVS Apache Timeline



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Design Evolution of Hero Honda Karizma

2003 - 2019

Motorcycles have always been a craze in India, and there are fewer motorcycles which made it possible and one of them was the Hero Honda Karizma. Launched in 2003 the bike became the most loved bike by the youth. Karizma was the highest displacement bike of that time that has provided higher performance and also top speed of 125 km/h. The main reason for the success of this bike was its sheer performance and semi-faired looks which makes it a proper sports bike in India.



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Hero Honda Karizma Timeline



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Design Evolution of KTM Duke in India

2012 - Present

In 2012 Ktm launched Duke 200 in India which became the biggest head turner in India. The Bike was targeted for naked bike segments in India and it became an instant hit in India. Duke became famous because of its aggressive styling and higher performance which was unmatched in India at that time. KTM has managed its unique design language philosophy over a decade in India which makes the dukes more desirable than before.



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KTM Duke Timeline



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Design Evolution of Yamaha YZF R - 15

2008 - Present

Launched in 2008 Yamaha R15 was a full faired sport in India. The bike has a design language from the iconic Yamaha R1 which was a pure liter class bike In foreign countries. There are multiple factors that make the R15 a successful bike are the full fairing, twin pods lights, clip on handlebar and rear mono shock suspensions increase the overall handling of the bike at higher speeds in India. The stance was also more aggressive as compared to other bikes and it was also quite expensive but it doesn't stop people from buying it. Right now in India Yamaha is selling its third generation of R15.



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Yamaha R15 Timeline



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Design Evolution of API Lambretta

1955 - 1990

Automobile products of India began assembling Innocenti built Lambretta Scooters in India after the Independence In 1950's. Ferdinando Innocenti Was the founder of Lambretta scooter and his vision for the Lambretta was to make a scooter for mass production that can be driven and owned by anyone in the world. The design language of Lambretta at first was more utility based but later its design language evolved to more classic and flowing Design.



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API Lambretta Timeline



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History of Automobile Design in India

Iconic Two Wheelers

by

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Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/history-automobile-design-india/design-evolution-two-wheelers/design-evolution-bajaj-chetak>

Design Evolution of Bajaj Chetak

1970 - 2005

2019 - Present

In 1972 Bajaj introduced “Chetak” the most important two wheeler in the history of the two wheeler industry in India. The Chetak was designed based on the Vespa Sprint model in India. In the 1970's the chetak popularity was so high that people were willing to pay double the showroom price to get one of these scooters. Owning a Bajaj Chetak becomes a sense of pride for many Indian families. In 2002 Bajaj stopped the production of Chetak due to poor sales figures and also not being technologically advanced at that time. But in 2020 the legend was reborn with a newer design language and most technologically advanced, “Chetak Electric” was designed to compete in the current trend of electric scooter market.



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Bajaj Chetak Timeline



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Design Evolution of Honda Activa

2001 - Present

In 2001 Honda launched an iconic scooter which has changed the Indian scooter market it was the “Activa”. Activa was the first scooter in India that has a CVT transmission which makes it more easy to ride and affordable that makes it more successful in India than any other scooter. Current Honda is selling the 6th generation of Activa which is the most fuel efficient till now. There were not too many design changes in Activa after the launch of Activa 2G there are only some cosmetic changes in the exterior design. The main changes were in the engine technology.



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Honda Activa Timeline



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Source:

<https://www.dsource.in/resource/history-automobile-design-india/conclusion>

Conclusion

As in most Asian nations, India has an affection and love for motorcycles and Scooters and it really shows on Indian roads. The feeling of owning a bike has consistently been the underlying goal for a ton of Indians and it also gives a sense of success to many Indian families. But this aspiration is mixed with practicality. The Indian consumer wants the most economical option and that doesn't just mean in terms of price; it extends to fuel economy as well. But in the development of the two wheeler industry, the electric vehicle (EV) situation will be the most effective factor for the Indian auto market in the coming next 10 years. The megatrends of electrification, safety are gradually making their mark in the two-wheeler market too. In India, two-wheelers have been taking the lead in the country's electrification journey so far and it looks like this will continue, and a lot of new start-up companies are making it more interesting. These turns of events, alongside the introduction of new guidelines, are provoking industry to compete in a more competitive way and it helps the overall development of the two wheeler industry to compete with global market and newer market trends. Customer trends are also evolving today and are reflected across numerous sections. Patterns are evolving quicker, both as far as buyer tastes and buy/utilization designs.



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