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## Picking up the Max - Isuzu D-Max Review

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Pickups are really not for consumer markets. Commercial market is its fit and forte and in India, pickups are still viewed as load carriers, not for personal use. Isuzu thinks the change is happening and wants to lead the change. The company's D-Max pickup range takes the fight to the front doors of Tata and Mahindra to offer not just cargo space but to offer a better personal mobility as well. There are a total of three variants - Single Cab, Space Cab Flat Deck and Space Cab Arched Deck. As the names suggest, the Single Cab is the bare bone version with a flat deck and is a two-seater, while the Space Cab Flat Deck also gets a flat deck with some space behind the two seats. The final variant, Space Cab Arched Deck is the one we are going to talk about as this is more suited to be for personal purposes also with creature comforts like AC, music system, power windows, tachometer etc.

### Styling



On the outside, the D-Max Space Cab Arched Deck gets chrome finished grille, door handles and outside rear view mirrors, body coloured front bumper and deck. There is no option of alloy wheels or wheel covers. The D-Max looks really good from the front with its large headlamps and the bulge on the hood giving it a muscular profile. At the rear, things are kept simple with vertical tail lamps and no other drama except for the chrome door handle.



Inside again, though the layout is pretty simple, the quality of the build and materials used are top notch for the segment. The seats provide good support all around and the presence of a dead pedal is happily welcomed.

### Features



The space behind the seats can be used for bags and other items that you may need to access from inside. Though the space is not meant to be used to seat people, Isuzu should have thought that we



may not follow the rules and have kindly provided a headrest-kind-of cushion. Cup holders find their place between and behind the seats.

The centre console hosts the AC vents, music system and the HVAC controls. Other features include central door lock, tiltable steering and day-night inside rear view mirror. Overall, the D-Max satisfies all the basic requirements, has best-in-class build quality and looks good.

### **Engine and Performance**



Now, through the bulge on the hood comes the gnarl of a 2.5-litre turbocharged diesel engine that puts out a maximum power of 134 hp at 3600 rpm. A peak torque of 294 Nm comes charging at 1800-3200 rpm and you have to wait till around 2000 rpm for the engine to get the boost from the turbo. Once the turbo kicks in, the D-Max goes without a worry in the world with really small first and second gears, which is expected for a pickup, and longer third, fourth and fifth gears. The engine shows no hesitation in building speeds over 140 kmph and went on to 160 kmph without a hiccup. Though this was on a private track and without any load at the back, we can expect a similar experience with maximum payload (1200 kgs) given the reputation of the company and mainly of the engine.

### **Ride and Handling**



While the 5-speed gearbox fell into place without a problem, Isuzu could have made it tighter. The D-Max behaved well for its size and weight with great confidence around the twists and turns with straight line stability also in the better side of things. The pickup behaved more like a car thanks to the rigidity of the body. The suspension setup is typical for the pickup segment with independent coil sprint at the front and leaf spring at the rear. Without any load, the vehicle did bounce more over speed bumpers than it would with load.

#### Verdict



To conclude, Isuzu feels that the D-Max will play a perfect role with customers looking for a vehicle that performs both business and personal duties. And they have succeeded to an extent with it. But then, the D-Max needs a separate commercial vehicle driving license as it will be registered as one. If you take that extra step, then you will be getting a good looking pickup with a powerful engine, better dynamics and can handle personal duties from time to time. And at Rs. 7.09 lakhs ex-showroom Mumbai for the Space Cab Arched Deck, Isuzu D-Max is also priced competitively.