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Before zeroing in on an insurance policy, ensure that you enquire with multiple companies to understand the terms of coverage and premiums, as the focus on customisation necessitates thorough homework.

Marriage is a very important moment in a couple's life where they spend a fortune and plan things meticulously for their big day.

Despite the massive amounts involved, many families hesitate to secure these extravaganzas financially against cancellations and other losses. This reluctance persists at a mammoth scale as India is likely to see over 48 lakh weddings by the end of the calendar year. These events and associated ceremonies are expected to generate business worth Rs 6 lakh crore, as per the Confederation of All India Traders.

The **average budgets have gone up**, with an increasing number of Indians willing to splurge on that all-important big day of their lives. Companies such as public sector general insurers, **ICICI Lombard**, Bajaj Allianz and Future Generali offer wedding insurance covers to make good losses arising from wedding cancellation but the awareness and uptake continue to be low. One key reason is that families and couples do not want to give thought to the possibility of the wedding being cancelled.

“Despite huge amounts being spent during weddings, the awareness levels continue to be low. The other reason for slower pick-up could be that the parties involved do not want to believe that there will be

contingencies that could lead to cancellations. There is an increase in proposals, but the overall size of the wedding insurance business continues to be small,” says Gaurav Arora, Chief, Underwriting, Claims and Property, ICICI Lombard General Insurance.

Typically, it’s the professional wedding planners who impress upon the families the importance of having such covers in place. Insurance industry insiders *Moneycontrol* spoke to say that families consider wedding insurance covers only when the **budget** is over Rs 50 lakh.

Coverage against cancellation, fire damage

Essentially, these are **event insurance policies** packaged as wedding covers, not easily available off the shelf. You, your wedding planner or your broker will have to approach the insurance company for the coverage, which will then be customised per your requirements, though some companies do offer standard, basic plans too.

The premiums vary widely, depending on the insurance company and the losses you want covered under the plan. “The premium is linked to the covers sought – it could be cancellation of the wedding ceremony, damage to property, burglary, and public liability and so on,” says **TA Ramalingam, Chief Technical Officer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance.**

The coverage terms are also linked to the location and venue. “The overall budget, the period of celebration, and cost of valuables are some of the parameters that influence wedding insurance premiums. For example, if a customer buys a cover only for event cancellation (due to fire, declaration of state mourning, etc), then our minimum premium may be Rs 2,500 plus GST for a cover of Rs 20 lakh,” he adds.

Destination weddings – even the ones taking place at international locations – are covered under wedding insurance. “It can cover your travel costs, hotel stay, jewellery that you might be carrying and also guest liability,” says Arora.

Depending on your requirements and upon payment of an additional premium, you can also obtain coverage against terrorism, no-show of artistes due to accidents, damage to the venue and props and other equipment due to fire, burglary, etc. “Cancellation due to accidents caused to the bride or the groom would also be covered. You can also choose to cover any expenses arising out of damage to third parties – guests or their assets,” says Arora.

Before zeroing in on a policy, ensure that you enquire with multiple insurers to understand the terms of coverage and costs, as lack of standardisation and focus on customisation necessitate thorough homework. Evaluate premiums on the basis of coverage that you need and what the insurance company can offer. “Premiums for a Rs 5-lakh cover could start at around Rs 1,500. However, this will vary as per the number of guests, days and ceremonies covered rather than the sum assured alone. If you want a more elaborate cover, the premium could be in the region of Rs 25,000-30,000 for a Rs 50 lakh cover,” says Arora.

Changed your mind? Insurance will not come to your aid

Like all other insurance policies, wedding insurance, too, comes with a set of exclusions – expenses or losses that the policy will not reimburse. For instance, if the wedding is cancelled due to disputes between the bride, groom, or family members, the insurer will not make good the losses incurred on cancellations. “No show by the bride and groom due to change of mind shall not be paid for. Cancellation or delay of event due to death of close relatives may be covered, but as an add-on, on name basis and up to a specific age limit,” points out Arora.