



It Is Better To Be Safe Than Sorry

A travel insurance plan can compensate for the financial loss to a certain extent

By **Nirmala Konjengbam**

It is a wonderful experience, vacationing with your dear ones. But what if in between your luggage gets misplaced by the airlines crew? We all know of the recent terrorist blast in Sri Lanka, where during the Easter mass, the people in the Church were gunned down where 30 tourists lost their lives and 30 more were severely injured. No.. these incidents are not being pointed out to inculcate fear, but simply to remind you that one never knows when he or she will be in such grave situations.

There are various risks, a person is exposed to while travelling, right from trip cancellation due to inclement weather condition, delay or loss of checked-in baggage to

occurrence of a medical emergency while getting acclimatised to the climatic conditions of the country of travel. The very nature of these risks is unpredictable and if a person does not have adequate travel insurance, they can be caught unaware in an unknown

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country with no guidance.

Travel insurance usually covers medical expenses in case of emergency hospitalisation, accidents, medical evacuation, repatriation of mortal remains, flight delay or cancellation, loss of checked in baggage, loss of passport and trip cancellation. Most policies are designed to cover the costs and losses associated with unexpected events incurred to protect travellers from financial loss before or during their trip.

Sasikumar Adidamu, Chief Technical Officer, Bajaj Allianz General Insurance said, "People seldom think that things may go wrong, which can jeopardise all their plans. Travel insurance is a must on the list when travelling as it is the smartest tool that



safeguards you and your loved ones.” Proper planning is required regardless of a tight budget or a luxurious family holiday. Unforeseen circumstances could happen anywhere and any time, burning a big hole in the pocket. A travel insurance plan can compensate for the financial loss to a certain extent.

Travel insurance plans available in India are primarily categorised based on geographical coverage and the nature of travel. Under geographical coverage, customers can choose, based on the country of travel like coverage for worldwide including Unites States and Canada. In terms of nature of travel, categories are: leisure – for individual and family; MICE - meetings, incentives, conferences and exhibitions; corporate frequent travellers - business travellers and student. In short, insurers offer tailor-made travel insurance plans to suit every section of travellers

according to their requirements.

“A customer can opt for an individual travel insurance policy for each member or opt for family plan. In individual policy there is a separate sum insured for each member, whereas in a family plan the sum insured floats which means it spreads across the entire family. Additionally, there are specific plans available for senior citizens from 61 to 100 years,” elucidated Adidamu. Above all these one should consider medical

emergencies too. Misfortune could strike without warning. This coupled with flight delays or cancellation and baggage loss or delay incidents could force a traveller to face financial burden in thousands of dollars. Hence, an adequate travel insurance plan will help negate the impact of possible risks while travelling and ensure you have a stress free and fun-filled travel.

Although you can travel to many countries without an insurance, but the question is do you really want to take the risk of going through an expensive medical treatment in case of an emergency?

On the other hand, destination (geographical coverage), age, duration of travel and sum insured one opts for play a major role in determining the cost of travel insurance. Since medical cover is one of the important feature of travel insurance, one needs to opt for a cover depending on how expensive the medical treatments are in the country they are visiting.

Every year there is an increase in the number of students flying abroad for further studies. This poses different set of challenges for both the student and the parents. With safety and security being of paramount importance, the ideal way to feel secure in the absence of a familiar environment is a student travel insurance. According to the Ministry of External Affairs (MEA), 7,52,725 Indian students are

Top Five Destination For Indian Students

Sl. No	Country	Number Of Students
1	USA	2,11,703
2	Canada	1,24,000
3	Australia	87,115
4	Saudi Arabia	70,8000
5	UAE	50,000

Source: Ministry of External Affairs; Data as on 18.07.2018

Things To Keep In Mind Before Buying Travel Insurance

- Be honest and declare the medical conditions you are aware of on the proposal form, this will give you complete clarity on what will and will not be covered by your travel insurance plan.
- Check the policy to ensure that it covers you during the entire duration of your travel and also covers the destination you're travelling to (check for excluded countries).
- Make sure that the medical coverage included in the policy is extensive and eventualities like missed or cancelled flights or loss or delay of checked in baggage is included.
- Ensure that the policy covers you and your family members who are travelling with you and is inclusive of injuries arising out of adventure sports and terrorism.
- Make a note of the exclusions to ensure that all your requirements are covered.
- It is advisable to take additional seven days cover from your actual travel end date, so that in case your trip gets extended you are covered.
- Ensure that the sum insured limit of the policy is adequate. One can also avail of relevant add-ons such as home burglary too.
- Keep the contact details of the insurer handy.

studying abroad, the US continuing to be the preferred destination.

Most of the overseas colleges and universities make it mandatory to have travel insurance and even otherwise, studying abroad in an unknown country has its own risks. Given the long duration stay till the completion of the studies, catering to medical expenses in foreign currency can be prohibitively expensive. For instance, if the insured person is hospitalised and needs attendance of a family member, insurance policy would pay for the expenses incurred on the family member's visit.

Further, Adidamu added, "Student travel insurance covers specific requirements of the university along with accident, hospitalisation, family visit expenses, incidental expenses, tuition fee, loss of luggage and loss of passport. Student travel insurance policies are well crafted to take care of situations that may

arise when a student is living alone outside India."

Individuals can customise the policy as per requirement and opt for add-on covers to enhance the extent of coverage. Loss of personal belongings cover, escort for minor child (or children), emergency



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hotel extension for insured and family member are some of the rider options one can opt for by paying additional premium.

Gone are the days when people visited insurance branch or called an agent to buy insurance policy. The evolution of technology has made life easier and one can buy travel insurance simply online.

Every policy holder expects speedy claim settlement process. Many have gone through bitter experience at the time of claim when insurers failed to deliver policyholders expectation, leading to dissatisfaction. Claims process varies from insurer to insurer.

"A claim can be rejected if it comes under any exclusions mentioned in the policy document like pre-existing medical conditions and its complications, experimental or unproven or non-standard treatments, travelling against the advice of physician, travelling for the purpose of obtaining treatment," explained Adidamu.

To bridge this gap most of the insurers have simplified the claim process. Insured can give a missed call on one unified number from anywhere in the world. A call back is arranged within 10 minutes, handholding the customer till insured is safe. Insurer can place a guarantee of payment anywhere in the world for medical expenses one may incur to ensure a seamless cashless transaction. On receipt of complete set of claim documents, decision on claim is communicated to the customer within 30 days.

Travel insurance is a must for those travelling abroad regardless of the nature of trip as the premium is affordable. Once you have wrapped your family with protective cover of travel insurance there is nothing that can stop you and your family for enjoying a great trip. The secret to having a memorable family trip is to have a responsible trip. ■

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