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Feature Article

Keep a Close Watch

Breathe new life into your old or damaged jewellery – *a grand idea* but imagine giving your genuine diamond ring to a jeweller for resizing but the diamond gets removed. What you take back home is a substitute stone instead of that pretty little diamond!

Indeed, an unpleasant experience. It is more tormenting when that piece of jewellery is a gift or one which symbolizes family legacy.

People, worldwide have suffered at the hands of the unscrupulous jewellers, losing pieces of their jewellery upon leaving them for repairs or cleaning.

One such customer, Sashi Kiran, a market vendor owned a beautifully crafted antic gold necklace which needed some repair works. The necklace which had cost her \$300 almost 27 years back got broken. Sashi decided to get it fixed by a well-known jeweller in Suva in the hope that she will once again be able to enjoy her necklace.

The necklace had 45 gold beads, skilfully placed in it. Sashi was in love with these beads, as it added more beauty to the piece. Before giving the necklace for repair, she acted responsibly by counting the beads. After a few days, Sashi was informed that the necklace was ready for collection.

An overjoyed Sashi went to collect her jewellery. However, her excitement was short-lived. At her first glance, she realised her necklace was not the same.

Confounded as she looked, Sashi found the necklace to have 5 less beads. She then raised her concern with the jeweller who stood adamant that there were only 40 beads and not 45.

Sashi insisted on 45 beads and lodged a complaint with the Consumer Council of Fiji. The Council mediated the complaint and the jeweller agreed to pay Sashi only \$170 as compensation for the missing five beads.

Sashi resorted to the Small Claims Tribunal as she desired for more compensation.

In another case, Anna Koroi, left her wedding ring, a pair of earrings and bracelet overnight with a jeweller for cleaning. She was found blaming her stars when she collected her jewellery the next day. Her earrings had been replaced with another pair by the jeweller.

Like Sashi and Anna, there are many other customers who have been hoodwinked by some jewellers. The consumers are advised to check their jewellery before giving them to the jeweller. When handing the jewellery to the jeweller, check it again in his/her presence.

When you go to collect the jewellery after it is fixed or polished, again, check the jewellery in the presence of the jeweller. Do not wait to check the jewellery upon returning home. This will help you save on your time, in case there is a problem with the jewellery. Consumers must be prompt in raising the problem and not sleep on the matter.

Our Advice:

- **Inspect your piece before repair and in the presence of the jeweler** – check all visible marks and color of your jewellery in the presence of the jeweler. Take a picture of the jewellery, in particular, any important aspect that matters to you before handing over. Also weigh the jewellery and measure the length at the handing over.
- **Look for noticeable changes after repair** – if you notice any major changes such as discoloration or light weight after repair, then raise the concern with the jeweler.
- **Check the weighing scale** – be sure to notice the sticker stamp on the weighing instrument being used by the jeweler to ensure it is giving the correct reading.
- **How long will the repair take?** -Where the repair is fairly minor, get it done in-store while you wait.