



:: आयुक्त (अपील्स) का कार्यालय, वस्तु एवं सेवा कर और केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क ::  
O/O THE COMMISSIONER (APPEALS), GST & CENTRAL EXCISE,

द्वितीय तल, पी एस टी भवन / 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, GST Bhavan,  
रेस कोर्स रिंग रोड, / Race Course Ring Road,  
राजकोट / Rajkot - 360 001



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रजिस्टर्ड डाक ए.डी. द्वारा :- DIN-20220564SX0000999A2B

क	अपील / फाइल संख्या/ Appeal / File No.	मूल क्रमादेश सं / OIONo.	दिनांक/ Date
	V2/161 to 165/RAJ/2021	10/BB/AC/2020-21	05-02-2021

ख अपील आदेश संख्या (Order-In-Appeal No.):

**RAJ-EXCUS-000-APP-033 TO 037-2022**

आदेश का दिनांक /  
Date of Order: **20.05.2022** जारी करने की तारीख /  
Date of issue: **23.05.2022**

श्री अखिलेश कुमार, आयुक्त (अपील्स), राजकोट द्वारा पारित/  
Passed by Shri Akhilesh Kumar, Commissioner (Appeals), Rajkot.

ग अपर आयुक्त/ संयुक्त आयुक्त/ उपायुक्त/ सहायक आयुक्त, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क/ सेवाकर/ वस्तु एवं सेवाकर,  
राजकोट / जामनगर / गांधीधामा द्वारा उपरोक्त जारी मूल आदेश से सृजित: /  
Arising out of above mentioned OIO issued by Additional/Joint/Deputy/Assistant Commissioner, Central  
Excise/ST / GST, Rajkot / Jamnagar / Gandhidham :

घ अपीलकर्ता/प्रतिवादी का नाम एवं पता / Name & Address of the Appellant & Respondent :-

M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Old Ghuntu Road National Highway 8-A, Morbi-363642 .

इस आदेश (अपील) से अप्पिचि कोर्द व्यक्ति निम्नलिखित तरीके में उपयुक्त प्राधिकारी / प्राधिकरण के समक्ष अपील दायर कर सकता है।/  
Any person aggrieved by this Order-in-Appeal may file an appeal to the appropriate authority in the following  
way.

(A) सीमा शुल्क, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क एवं सेवाकर अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण के प्रति अपील, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क अधिनियम, 1944 की धारा 35B के अंतर्गत एवं वित्त अधिनियम, 1994 की धारा 86 के अंतर्गत निम्नलिखित जगह की जा सकती है।/  
Appeal to Customs, Excise & Service Tax Appellate Tribunal under Section 35B of CEA, 1944 / Under Section 86 of the Finance Act, 1994 an appeal lies to:-

(i) वर्गीकरण मुल्यांकन से सम्बन्धित सभी मामले सीमा शुल्क, केन्द्रीय उत्पादन शुल्क एवं सेवाकर अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण की विशेष पीठ, वेस्ट ब्लॉक नं 2, आर.के. पुरम, नई दिल्ली, को की जानी चाहिए।/  
The special bench of Customs, Excise & Service Tax Appellate Tribunal of West Block No. 2, R.K. Puram, New Delhi in all matters relating to classification and valuation.

(ii) उपरोक्त परिच्छेद 1(a) में बताए गए अपीलों के अलावा सेच सभी अपीलों सीमा शुल्क, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क एवं सेवाकर अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण (सिस्टम) की पश्चिम क्षेत्रीय पीठिका, द्वितीय तल, बहुमाली भवन आसारवा अहमदाबाद- 360016 को की जानी चाहिए।/  
To the West regional bench of Customs, Excise & Service Tax Appellate Tribunal (CESTAT) at, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, Bhaumali Bhawan, Asarwa Ahmedabad-360016 in case of appeals other than as mentioned in para- 1(a) above

(iii) अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण के समक्ष अपील प्रस्तुत करने के लिए केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क (अपील) नियमवली, 2001, के नियम 6 के अंतर्गत निर्धारित किए गये प्रपत्र EA-3 को चार प्रतियों में दर्ज किया जाना चाहिए। इनमें से कम से कम एक प्रति के साथ, जहाँ उत्पाद शुल्क की माँग, ब्याज की माँग और लगाया गया जुर्माना, रुपए 5 लाख या उससे कम, 5 लाख रुपए या 50 लाख रुपए तक अथवा 50 लाख रुपए से अधिक है तो क्रमशः 1,000/- रुपये, 5,000/- रुपये अथवा 10,000/- रुपये का निर्धारित जमा शुल्क की प्रति संलग्न करें। निर्धारित शुल्क का भुगतान, संबंधित अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण की शाखा के सहायक रजिस्ट्रार के नाम से किसी भी सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंक द्वारा जारी रेबॉकिट बैंक ड्राफ्ट द्वारा किया जाना चाहिए। संबंधित ड्राफ्ट का भुगतान, बैंक की उस शाखा में होना चाहिए जहाँ संबंधित अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण की शाखा स्थित है। स्वयं आदेश (स्टे ऑर्डर) के लिए आवेदन-पत्र के साथ 500/- रुपए का निर्धारित शुल्क जमा करना होगा।/  
The appeal to the Appellate Tribunal shall be filed in quadruplicate in form EA-3 / as prescribed under Rule 6 of Central Excise (Appeal) Rules, 2001 and shall be accompanied against one which at least should be accompanied by a fee of Rs. 1,000/-, Rs.5,000/-, Rs.10,000/- where amount of duty demand/interest/penalty/refund is upto 5 Lac., 5 Lac to 50 Lac and above 50 Lac respectively in the form of crossed bank draft in favour of Asst. Registrar of branch of any nominated public sector bank of the place where the bench of the Tribunal is situated. Application made for grant of stay shall be accompanied by a fee of Rs. 500/-.

(B) अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण के समक्ष अपील, वित्त अधिनियम, 1994 की धारा 86(1) के अंतर्गत सेवाकर नियमवली, 1994, के नियम 9(1) के तहत निर्धारित प्रपत्र S.T.-5 में चार प्रतियों में की जा सकती है एवं उसके साथ जिस आदेश के विरुद्ध अपील की गयी हो, उसकी प्रति साथ में संलग्न करें (उनमें से एक प्रति प्रमाणित होनी चाहिए) और इनमें से कम से कम एक प्रति के साथ, जहाँ सेवाकर की माँग, ब्याज की माँग और लगाया गया जुर्माना, रुपए 5 लाख या उससे कम, 5 लाख रुपए या 50 लाख रुपए तक अथवा 50 लाख रुपए से अधिक है तो क्रमशः 1,000/- रुपये, 5,000/- रुपये अथवा 10,000/- रुपये का निर्धारित जमा शुल्क की प्रति संलग्न करें। निर्धारित शुल्क का भुगतान, संबंधित अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण की शाखा के सहायक रजिस्ट्रार के नाम से किसी भी सार्वजनिक क्षेत्र के बैंक द्वारा जारी रेबॉकिट बैंक ड्राफ्ट द्वारा किया जाना चाहिए। संबंधित ड्राफ्ट का भुगतान, बैंक की उस शाखा में होना चाहिए जहाँ संबंधित अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण की शाखा स्थित है। स्वयं आदेश (स्टे ऑर्डर) के लिए आवेदन-पत्र के साथ 500/- रुपए का निर्धारित शुल्क जमा करना होगा।/  
The appeal under sub section (1) of Section 86 of the Finance Act, 1994, to the Appellate Tribunal Shall be filed in quadruplicate in Form S.T.5 as prescribed under Rule 9(1) of the Service Tax Rules, 1994, and shall be accompanied by a copy of the order appealed against (one of which shall be certified copy) and should be accompanied by a fee of Rs. 1,000/- where the amount of service tax & interest demanded & penalty levied is more than five lakhs but not exceeding Rs. Fifty Lakhs, Rs.10,000/- where the amount of service tax & interest demanded & penalty levied is more than fifty Lakhs rupees, in the form of crossed bank draft in favour of the Assistant Registrar of the bench of nominated Public Sector Bank of the place where the bench of the Tribunal is situated. / Application made for grant of stay shall be accompanied by a fee of Rs.500/-.



- (i) वित्त अधिनियम, 1994 की धारा 86 की उप-धाराओं (2) एवं (2A) के अंतर्गत दर्ज की गयी अपील, सेवाकर नियमवाली, 1994, के नियम 9(2) एवं 9(2A) के तहत निर्धारित प्रपत्र S.T.-7 में की जा सकेगी एवं उसके साथ आयुक्त, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क अथवा आयुक्त (अपील), केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क द्वारा पारित आदेश की प्रतियाँ संलग्न करें (उनमें से एक प्रति प्रामाणित होनी चाहिए) और आयुक्त द्वारा सहायक आयुक्त अथवा उपायुक्त, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क/ सेवाकर, को अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण को आवेदन दर्ज करने का निर्देश देने वाले आदेश की प्रति भी साथ में संलग्न करनी होगी। / The appeal under sub section (2) and (2A) of the section 86 the Finance Act 1994, shall be filed in Form ST.7 as prescribed under Rule 9 (2) & 9(2A) of the Service Tax Rules, 1994 and shall be accompanied by a copy of order of Commissioner Central Excise or Commissioner, Central Excise (Appeals) (one of which shall be a certified copy) and copy of the order passed by the Commissioner authorizing the Assistant Commissioner or Deputy Commissioner of Central Excise/ Service Tax to file the appeal before the Appellate Tribunal.
- (ii) सीमा शुल्क, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क एवं सेवाकर अपीलीय प्राधिकरण (सेस्टेट) के प्रति अपीलों के मामले में केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क अधिनियम 1944 की धारा 35एफ के अंतर्गत, जो की वित्तीय अधिनियम, 1994 की धारा 83 के अंतर्गत सेवाकर को भी लागू की गई है, इस आदेश के प्रति अपीलीय प्राधिकरण में अपील करते समय उत्पाद शुल्क/सेवा कर मांग के 10 प्रतिशत (10%), जब मांग एवं जमाना विवादित है, या जमाना, जब केवल जमाना विवादित है, का भुगतान किया जाए, बशर्त कि इस धारा के अंतर्गत जमा कि जाने वाली अपेक्षित देय राशि दस करोड़ रूपए से अधिक न हो।  
केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क एवं सेवाकर के अंतर्गत "मांग किए गए शुल्क" में निम्न शामिल है  
(i) धारा 11 डी के अंतर्गत रकम  
(ii) सेनवेट जमा की ली गई गलत राशि  
(iii) सेनवेट जमा नियमावली के नियम 6 के अंतर्गत देय रकम  
- बशर्त यह कि इस धारा के प्रावधानों के अंतर्गत (सं 2) अधिनियम 2014 के आरंभ से पूर्व किसी अपीलीय प्राधिकारी के समक्ष विचाराधीन स्थान अपील एवं अपील को लागू नहीं होगा।  
For an appeal to be filed before the CESTAT, under Section 35F of the Central Excise Act, 1944 which is also made applicable to Service Tax under Section 83 of the Finance Act, 1994, an appeal against this order shall lie before the Tribunal on payment of 10% of the duty demanded where duty or duty and penalty are in dispute, or penalty, where penalty alone is in dispute, provided the amount of pre-deposit payable would be subject to a ceiling of Rs. 10 Crores,  
Under Central Excise and Service Tax, "Duty Demanded" shall include :  
(i) amount determined under Section 11 D;  
(ii) amount of erroneous Cenvat Credit taken;  
(iii) amount payable under Rule 6 of the Cenvat Credit Rules  
- provided further that the provisions of this Section shall not apply to the stay application and appeals pending before any appellate authority prior to the commencement of the Finance (No.2) Act, 2014.
- (C) भारत सरकार कोषनीय आवेदन :  
**Revision application to Government of India:**  
इस आदेश की पुनरीक्षणयाचिका निम्नलिखित मामलों में, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क अधिनियम, 1994 की धारा 35EE के प्रथमपूरतक के अंतर्गत बरत लिये, भारत सरकार, पुनरीक्षण आवेदन इकाई, वित्त मंत्रालय, राजस्व विभाग, चौथी मंजिल, जीवन दीप भवन, संसद मार्ग, नई दिल्ली-110001, को किया जाना चाहिए।  
A revision application lies to the Under Secretary, to the Government of India, Revision Application Unit, Ministry of Finance, Department of Revenue, 4th Floor, Jeevan Deep Building, Parliament Street, New Delhi-110001, under Section 35EE of the CEA 1944 in respect of the following case, governed by first proviso to sub-section (1) of Section-35B ibid:
- (i) यदि माल के किसी नुकसान के मामले में, जहां नुकसान किसी माल को किसी कारखाने से भंडार गृह के पारगमन के दौरान या किसी अन्य कारखाने या फिर किसी एक भंडार गृह से दूसरे भंडार गृह पारगमन के दौरान, या किसी भंडार गृह में या भंडारण में माल के प्रसंस्करण के दौरान, किसी कारखाने या किसी भंडार गृह में माल के नुकसान के मामले में।  
In case of any loss of goods, where the loss occurs in transit from a factory to a warehouse or to another factory or from one warehouse to another during the course of processing of the goods in a warehouse or in storage whether in a factory or in a warehouse
- (ii) भारत के बाहर किसी राष्ट्र या क्षेत्र को निर्यात कर रहे माल के विनिर्माण में प्रयुक्त कच्चे माल पर भरी गई केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क के छुट (रिबेट) के मामले में, जो भारत के बाहर किसी राष्ट्र या क्षेत्र को निर्यात की गयी है।  
In case of rebate of duty of excise on goods exported to any country or territory outside India of on excisable material used in the manufacture of the goods which are exported to any country or territory outside India.
- (iii) यदि उत्पाद शुल्क का भुगतान किए बिना भारत के बाहर, नेपाल या भूटान को माल निर्यात किया गया है।  
In case of goods exported outside India export to Nepal or Bhutan, without payment of duty.
- (iv) सुनिश्चित उत्पाद के उत्पादन शुल्क के भुगतान के लिए जो क्यूटी क्रेडिट इस अधिनियम एवं इसके विभिन्न प्रावधानों के तहत मान्य की गई है और ऐसे आदेश को आयुक्त (अपील) के द्वारा वित्त अधिनियम (नं 2), 1998 की धारा 109 के द्वारा निवृत्त की गई तारीख अथवा समाप्तविधि पर या बाद में पारित किए गए हैं।  
Credit of any duty allowed to be utilized towards payment of excise duty on final products under the provisions of this Act or the Rules made there under such order is passed by the Commissioner (Appeals) on or after, the date appointed under Sec. 109 of the Finance (No.2) Act, 1998.
- (v) उपरोक्त आवेदन की दो प्रतियाँ प्रपत्र संख्या EA-8 में, जो की केन्द्रीय उत्पादन शुल्क (अपील) नियमावली, 2001, के नियम 9 के अंतर्गत विनिर्दिष्ट है, इस आदेश के संश्लेषण के 3 माह के अंतर्गत की जानी चाहिए। उपरोक्त आवेदन के साथ मूल आदेश व अपील आदेश की दो प्रतियाँ संलग्न की जानी चाहिए। साथ ही केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क अधिनियम, 1944 की धारा 35-EE के तहत निर्धारित शुल्क की अदायगी के साक्ष्य के तौर पर TR-6 की प्रति संलग्न की जानी चाहिए।  
The above application shall be made in duplicate in Form No. EA-8 as specified under Rule, 9 of Central Excise (Appeals) Rules, 2001 within 3 months from the date on which the order sought to be appealed against is communicated and shall be accompanied by two copies each of the OIO and Order-In-Appeal. It should also be accompanied by a copy of TR-6 Challan evidencing payment of prescribed fee as prescribed under Section 35-EE of CEA, 1944, under Major Head of Account.
- (vi) पुनरीक्षण आवेदन के साथ निम्नलिखित निर्धारित शुल्क की अदायगी की जानी चाहिए।  
जहाँ संलग्न रकम एक लाख रुपये या उससे कम हो तो रुपये 200/- का भुगतान किया जाए और यदि संलग्न रकम एक लाख रुपये से ज्यादा हो तो रुपये 1000 -/ का भुगतान किया जाए।  
The revision application shall be accompanied by a fee of Rs. 200/- where the amount involved in Rupees One Lac or less and Rs. 1000/- where the amount involved is more than Rupees One Lac.
- (D) यदि इस आदेश में कई मूल आदेशों का समावेश है तो प्रत्येक मूल आदेश के लिए शुल्क का भुगतान, उपरोक्त ढंग से किया जाना चाहिए। इस तथ्य के होते हुए भी की निम्न पत्रों कार्य से बचने के लिए यथास्थिति अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण को एक अपील या केन्द्रीय सरकार को एक आवेदन किया जाता है। / In case, if the order covers various numbers of order- in Original, fee for each O.I.O. should be paid in the aforesaid manner, not withstanding the fact that the one appeal to the Appellant Tribunal or the one application to the Central Govt. As the case may be, is filled to avoid scriptoria work if excising Rs. 1 lakh fee of Rs. 100/- for each.
- (E) यथासंशोधित न्यायालय शुल्क अधिनियम, 1975, के अनुसूची-1 के अनुसार मूल आदेश एवं स्थगन आदेश की प्रति पर निर्धारित 6.50 रुपये का न्यायालय शुल्क टिकट लगा होना चाहिए।  
One copy of application or O.I.O. as the case may be, and the order of the adjudicating authority shall bear a court fee stamp of Rs.6.50 as prescribed under Schedule-I in terms of the Court Fee Act, 1975, as amended.
- (F) सीमा शुल्क, केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क एवं सेवाकर अपीलीय न्यायाधिकरण (कार्य विधि) नियमावली, 1982 में बर्णित एवं अन्य संबंधित मामलों को सम्मिलित करने वाले नियमों की ओर भी ध्यान आकर्षित किया जाता है।  
Attention is also invited to the rules covering these and other related matters contained in the Customs, Excise and Service Appellate Tribunal (Procedure) Rules, 1982.
- (G) उच्च अपीलीय प्राधिकारी को अपील दाखिल करने से संबंधित व्यापक, विस्तृत और नवीनतम प्रावधानों के लिए, अपीलार्थी विभागीय वेबसाइट [www.cbec.gov.in](http://www.cbec.gov.in) को देख सकते हैं।  
For the elaborate, detailed and latest provisions relating to filing of appeal to the higher appellate authority, the appellant may refer to the Departmental website [www.cbec.gov.in](http://www.cbec.gov.in)



**:: ORDER-IN-APPEAL ::**

The below mentioned appeals have been filed by the Appellants (hereinafter referred to as 'Appellant No. 1 to Appellant No. 5', as detailed in Table below) against Order-in-Original No. 10/BB/AC/2020-21 dated 8.2.2021 (hereinafter referred to as 'impugned order') passed by the Assistant Commissioner, Central GST, Morbi-II Division, Rajkot Commissionerate (hereinafter referred to as 'adjudicating authority') :-

Sl. No.	Appeal No.	Appellants	Name & Address of the Appellant
1.	V2/161/RAJ/2021	Appellant No.1	M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Old Ghuntu Road, National Highway 8A, Morbi.
2.	V2/162/RAJ/2021	Appellant No.2	Shri Kamlesh Laxmanbhai Jakasania, Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Morbi.
3.	V2/163/RAJ/2021	Appellant No.3	Shri Kailash Laxmanbhai Jakasania, Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Morbi.
4.	V2/164/RAJ/2021	Appellant No.4	Shri Kishor Sundarjibhai Jakasania, Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Morbi.
5.	V2/165/RAJ/2021	Appellant No.5	Shri Laxmanbhai Sundarjibhai Jakasania, Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd, Morbi.

2. The facts of the case, in brief, are that Appellant No. 1 was engaged in manufacture of Ceramic Floor & Wall Tiles falling under Chapter Sub Heading No. 69071010 of the Central Excise Tariff Act, 1985 and was holding Central Excise Registration No. AAACL9217DXM001. Intelligence gathered by the officers of Directorate General of Central Excise Intelligence, Zonal Unit, Ahmedabad (DGCEI) indicated that various Tile manufacturers of Morbi were indulging in malpractices in connivance with Shroffs / Brokers and thereby engaged in large scale evasion of Central Excise duty. Simultaneous searches were carried out on 22.12.2015 at the premises of Shroffs in Rajkot and Morbi and various incriminating documents were seized. On scrutiny of said documents and statements tendered by the said Shroffs, it was revealed that huge amounts of



cash were deposited from all over India into bank accounts managed by said Shroffs and such cash amounts were passed on to Tile Manufacturers through Brokers/Middlemen/Cash Handlers. Subsequently, simultaneous searches were carried out on 23.12.2015 and 31.12.2015 at the premises of Brokers/Middlemen/Cash Handlers engaged by the Tile manufacturers and certain incriminating documents were seized.

2.1 Investigation carried out by the officers of DGCEI revealed that the Shroffs opened bank accounts in the names of their firms and passed on the bank account details to the Tile manufacturers through their Brokers/Middlemen. The Tile manufacturers further passed on the bank account details to their customers/ buyers with instructions to deposit the cash in respect of the goods sold to them without bills into these accounts. After depositing the cash, the customers used to inform the Tile manufacturers, who in turn would inform the Brokers or directly to the Shroffs. Details of such cash deposit along with the copies of pay-in-slips were communicated to the manufacturers by the Customers. The Shroffs on confirming the receipt of the cash in their bank accounts, passed on the cash to the Brokers after deducting their commission from it. The Brokers further handed over the cash to the Tile manufacturers after deducting their commission. This way the sale proceeds of an illicit transaction was routed from buyers of goods to Tile manufacturers through Shroffs and Brokers.

2.2 During scrutiny of documents seized from the office premises of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff, and Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, and M/s Sarvodaya Shroff, Morbi, both Brokers, it was revealed that the said Shroff had received total amount of Rs. 1,98,00,050/- in their bank accounts during the period from November, 2014 to December, 2015, which were passed on to Appellant No. 1 in cash through Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, and M/s Sarvodaya Shroff, Morbi, both Brokers/Middlemen. The said amount was alleged to be sale proceeds of goods removed clandestinely by Appellant No. 1.

3. Show Cause Notice No. DGGI/AZU/Gr-A/Landmark/36-119/2019-20 dated 5.11.2019 was issued to Appellant No. 1 calling them to show cause as to why Central Excise duty amounting to Rs. 24,64,783/- should not be demanded and recovered from them under proviso to Section 11A(4) of the erstwhile Central Excise Act, 1944 (*hereinafter referred to as "Act"*) along with interest under Section 11AA of the Act and also proposing imposition of penalty under Section 11AC of the Act and fine in lieu of confiscation under Section 34 of the Act. The Show Cause Notice also proposed imposition of penalty upon Appellant No. 2 to Appellant No. 5 under Rule 26(1) of the Central Excise Rules, 2002 (*hereinafter*



*dy*

referred to as "Rules").

3.1 The above said Show Cause Notice was adjudicated vide the impugned order wherein the demand of Central Excise duty amounting to Rs. 24,64,783/- was confirmed under Section 11A(4) along with interest under Section 11AA of the Act. The impugned order imposed penalty of Rs. 24,64,783/- under Section 11AC of the Act upon Appellant No. 1 with option of reduced penalty as envisaged under provisions of Section 11AC of the Act. The impugned order also imposed penalty of Rs. 1,50,000/- each upon Appellant No. 2 to Appellant No. 5 under Rule 26(1) of the Rules.

4. Being aggrieved with the impugned order, Appellant Nos. 1 to 5 have preferred appeals on various grounds, *inter alia*, as below :-

Appellant No. 1:-

(i) The adjudicating authority has relied upon Statements of Shroff, Middleman/Broker and Partners while confirming the demand raised in the show cause notice. However, the adjudicating authority has passed the order without allowing cross examination of Departmental witnesses in spite of specific request made for the same. It is settled position of law that any statement recorded under Section 14 of the Central Excise Act, 1944 can be admitted as evidence only when its authenticity is established under provisions of Section 9D(1) of the Act and relied upon following case laws:

- (a) J.K. Cigarettes Ltd. Vs. CCE - 2009 (242) ELT 189 (Del).
- (b) M/s Jindal Drugs Pvt Ltd - 2016 (340) E.L.T. 67 (P & H)
- (c) Ambika International - 2018 (361) E.L.T. 90 (P & H)
- (d) G-Tech Industries - 2016 (339) E.L.T. 209 (P & H)
- (e) Andaman Timber Industries -2015-TIOL-255-SC-CX
- (f) Parmarth Iron Pvt. Ltd - 2010 (255) E.L.T. 496 (All.)

(ii) In view of the provisions of Section 9D of the Central Excise Act, 1944 and settled position of law by way of above referred judgments, since cross examination of departmental witnesses were not allowed their statements cannot be relied upon while passing the order and determining the duty amount payable by it. Especially when, there is no other evidence except so called oral evidences in the form of those statements and un-authenticated third party private records. Therefore, in view of the above, impugned order passed by the learned Joint Commissioner is liable to be set aside on this ground too.

That the adjudicating authority has not neutrally evaluated the evidences as well as submission made by it but heavily relied upon the



general statements of Shroff, Middleman/Broker, statements of partners as well as only scan copy of private records of K. N. Brothers , Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra and M/s Sarvodaya Shroff reproduced in the SCN. He has not seen that Shri Kailash Laxmanbhai Jakasania, Director of Appellant, has filed affidavit dated 26.6.2020 to the effect that they have not manufactured and cleared Ceramic Tiles as mentioned in the impugned SCN without issuing Central Excise invoices and without payment of duty; that neither he nor their other partners have received any cash as mentioned in the SCN.

- (iv) That the adjudicating authority based on the scan copy of certain bank accounts of Shroff and scan copy of private records of middleman/broker and general statements of Shroff and middleman/broker tried to discard vital discrepancies raised by the appellant without any cogent grounds. There is no link between the bank accounts of Shroff and private records of middleman/broker. Therefore, in absence of receipt of cash by the Shroff, link of such payment to middleman/broker and payment of cash to appellant, it is erroneous to uphold the allegations against appellant. He not only failed to judge the allegations, documentary evidences and defence neutrally but also failed as quasi-judicial authority and following principal of natural justice by passing speaking order as well as following judicial discipline too. Therefore, impugned order passed by him is liable to be set aside on this ground too.
- (v) That in the entire case except for so called evidences of receipt of money from the buyers of tiles that too without identity of buyers of the goods as well as identity of receiver of such cash from the middleman, no other evidence of manufacture of tiles, procurement of raw materials including fuel and power for manufacture of tiles, deployment of staff, manufacture, transportation of raw materials as well as finished goods, payment to all including raw material suppliers, transporters etc. in cash, no inculpatory statement of manufacturer viz. appellant, no statement of any of buyer, no statement of transporters who transported raw materials, who transported finished goods etc. are relied upon or even available. It is settled position of law that in absence of such evidences, grave allegations clandestine removal cannot sustain. It is also settled position of law that grave allegation of clandestine removal cannot sustain on the basis of assumption and presumption and relied upon following case laws:





fraud, collusion etc. as stated in Section 11A(4) of the Central Excise Act, 1944 exists in the instant case but it is alleged suppression of facts in the impugned notice based on the above referred general allegation.

Appellant Nos. 2 to 5:-

- (i) Their firm has already filed appeal against the impugned order as per the submission made therein contending that impugned order is liable to be set aside *in limine* and therefore, order imposing penalty upon them is also liable to be set aside.
- (ii) That it is a settled position of law that for imposition of penalty under Rule 26, inculpatory Statement of concern person must be recorded by the investigation. However, in the present case, no statement was recorded during investigation and hence, no penalty can be imposed under Rule 26.
- (iii) That no penalty is imposable upon them under Rule 26(1) of the Central Excise Rules, 2002, as there is no reason to believe on their part that goods were liable to confiscation.
- (iv) That there is no single documentary evidence to sustain the allegations; that the seized documents are not at all sustainable as evidence for the reasons detailed in reply filed by the Appellant No. 1. Investigating officers has not recorded statement of any buyers, transporter, supplier etc. Allegation of clandestine manufacture and removal of goods itself is fallacious.
- (v) That even duty demand has been worked out based on adverse inference drawn by investigation from the seized documents which itself are not sustainable evidence for various reasons discussed by their firm i.e. Appellant No.1 in their reply; that under the given circumstances no penalty can be imposed upon them under Rule 26 *ibid* and relied upon the following case laws:
  - (a) Manoj Kumar Pani - 2020 (260) ELT 92 (Tri. Delhi)
  - (b) Aarti Steel Industries - 2010 (262) ELT 462 (Tri. Mumbai)
  - (c) Nirmal Inductomelt Pvt. Ltd. - 2010 (259) ELT 243 (Tri. Delhi)
- (vi) In view of above, no penalty is imposable upon them under Rule 26 of the Central Excise Rules, 2002.

4. Personal Hearing in the matter was scheduled on 27.4.2022. Shri P.D. Rachchh, Advocate, appeared on behalf of Appellant Nos. 1 to 5. He reiterated the submissions made in appeal memoranda as well as in synopsis submitted during hearing. He further submitted that Shri Kasundra Kaka, middleman/broker, has not given name of anyone of Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd.





However, without any basis entries with name "Jako" are attributed to M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd from the private records of Shri Kasundra Kaka. He further submitted that no Statement of directors was recorded and in absence of any statement / oral evidences or documentary evidences, demand cannot survive.

5. I have carefully gone through the facts of the case, the impugned order, the appeal memoranda and written as well as oral submissions made by the Appellants. The issue to be decided in the case is whether the impugned order, in the facts of this case, confirming demand on Appellant No. 1 and imposing penalty on Appellant Nos. 1 to 5 is correct, legal and proper or not.

6. It is observed from the case records that the DGCEI had covered 4 Shroffs and 4 brokers/middlemen during investigation, which revealed that 186 manufacturers were routing sale proceeds of illicit transactions from the said Shroffs/Brokers/Middlemen. I find that the DGCEI has, *inter alia*, relied upon evidences collected from the premises of Shri K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, and M/s Sarvodaya Shroff, Morbi, both Brokers/ Middlemen, to allege clandestine removal of goods by the Appellants herein. It is settled position of law that in the case involving clandestine removal of goods, initial burden of proof is on the Department to prove the charges. Hence, it would be pertinent to examine the said evidences gathered by the DGCEI and relied upon by the adjudicating authority in the impugned order to confirm the demand of Central Excise duty.

7.1. I find that during search carried out at the office premises of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff, on 22.12.2015, certain private records were seized. The said private records contained bank statements of various bank accounts operated by M/s K.N. Brothers, sample of which is reproduced in the Show Cause Notice. I find that the said bank statements contained details like particulars, deposit amount, initiating branch code etc. Further, it was mentioned in handwritten form the name of city from where the amount was deposited and code name of concerned middlemen/Broker to whom they had handed over the said cash amount.

7.2. I have gone through the Statement of Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani, Owner of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, recorded on 23.12.2015 under Section 14 of the Act. In the said statement, Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani, *inter alia*, deposed that,

Please give details about your work in M/s Ambaji Enterprise, Rajkot and M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot.



A.5. .... We have opened the above mentioned 9 bank accounts and give the details of these accounts to the Middlemen located in Morbi. These middle men are working on behalf of Tile Manufacturers located in Morbi. These Middlemen then gives our Bank details to the Tiles Manufacturers of Morbi who in turn further passes these details to their Tiles dealers located all over India. The Tiles dealers then deposit cash in these accounts as per the instruction of the ceramic Tiles Manufacturers who in turn inform the Middlemen. The Middlemen then inform us about the cash deposited and the name of the city from where the amount has been deposited. We check all our bank accounts through online banking system on the computer installed in our office and take out the printout of the cash amount deposited during the entire day in all the accounts and mark the details on the printouts. On the same day, latest by 15:30 hours, we do RTGS to either M/s Siddhanath Agency and or to M/s Radheyshyam Enterprises in Sakar Complex, Soni Bazar, Rajkot. In lieu of the RTGS, M/s Siddhanath Agency and or to M/s Radheyshyam Agency gives the cash amount. The said cash is then distributed to concern Middlemen.

Q.6: Please give details of persons who had deposited the amount in your firms.

A.6. We are not aware of any persons who had deposited the cash amount in our bank accounts, the ceramic Tile Manufacturers direct the said parties to deposit the amount in cash in these accounts. As already stated above, we had given our bank accounts details to the middle man who had in turn given these numbers to the Tile Manufacturers.”

7.3 I find that search was carried out at the office premises of Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, a broker/middlemen, on 23.12.2015 and certain private records were seized. As reproduced in the Show Cause Notice, the said private records contained details like name of bank, cash amount, place from where the amount was deposited in bank, name of the person / authorized representative who collected the cash from him, date on which cash was handed over and name of the beneficiary of Tiles manufacturer of Morbi.

7.4 I have gone through the Statements of Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, recorded on 24.12.2015 and 28.12.2015 under Section 14 of the Act. In the said statements, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, *inter alia*, deposed that,

Statement dated 24.12.2015:

“Q.1: Please explain the business activities of M/s. Gayatri Enterprise, Morbi.



A.1: M/s. Gayatri Enterprise, Morbi is running business as a broker since November, 2011. I am handling all the day to day work of the firm including Accounts. My firm is working as a middleman between Shroffs and my clients, who are Ceramic Tile manufacturers/Traders. In this regard, my said clients approach me and inform that their certain amount of money has been deposited by their customers in the accounts of my Shroffs. Accordingly, I approach concerned Shroff to deliver the cash amount to me for subsequent distribution to my clients. For this work, I generally charge Commission @ 0.05% of the amount, so distributed to the concerned Manufacturers/ Traders. I further explain in detail that my Shroffs have given me a bank account number and the said number was given by me to my clients. Accordingly, dealers/buyers of the tile manufacturers (who are my clients) deposit the cash amount in the said account of the Shroffs as per the instructions of the Ceramic Tile manufacturers. My clients then inform me about the cash deposited and the name of the city from where the amount has been deposited. And once the said amount is deposited in the account of my Shroffs, my work is to receive the cash from the Shroffs and deliver the same to my clients. I further state that generally Shri Nitinbhai A. Chikhani of M/s. Maruti Enterprise & M/s. India Enterprise, Rajkot, used to deliver the cash to me. My Shroffs are M/s. Maruti Enterprise and M/s. India Enterprise, Rajkot, which is operated by Shri Nitin A. Chikhani & M/s. Ambaji Enterprises and M/s K.N. Brothers, both situated at Rajkot, which is operated by Shri Lalitbhai Gangwani.

....

Q.3: Please produce all documents/files/diaries/registers, pertaining to aforesaid business activity of your firm namely M/s. Gayatri Enterprise, Morbi for the period from inception of the firm to till date.

A.3: I produce herewith one "Office time" make Notebook containing pages from 1 to 160. The said notebook contains the details of cash amount received from the Shroffs for distribution of the same to my clients i.e. Ceramic Tile manufacturers/Traders, for the period from 24.11.2015 to 21.12.2015. I further explain the details shown at Entry No. 1 at the left side of Page No.1 of the said Notebook as under:

2758040 shiv 23-11 TPK

The first column "2758040" represents the amount received from Shri Nitin Chikhani of M/s. India Enterprise, Rajkot (shiv). The second column "shiv" represents the code name given to Shri Nitin Chikhani. The third column "23-11" represents the date of transaction. The forth column "TPK" represents the short abbreviation of my name.

In view of the above, I state that on 23.11.2015, I have received Rs.27,58,040/- from my shroff namely Shri Nitin Chikhani.

In the same manner, the other entries have been made during the course of regular business in this notebook.

....

Statement dated 28.12.2015:

"Q.4. Please state who has made the entries in these 28 records consisting of Diaries and why these entries have been made?"

A.4. I have personally made the entries in all these 28 diaries. On some pages, the writing may be different. Those entries have been made by my son



whenever I am out of station or in the office. These entries pertain to the cash received from the various Shroff and cash paid to the Ceramic Tile manufacturers.

Q.5. Two types of records are maintained by you. One in the Writing pads and other is in Pocket small diaries. Please explain what they contain?  
A.5. I am first explaining the details mentioned in the Writing pads. The Writing pads contain the details received from the Ceramic Tile manufacturers. The manufacturers or his representative calls me in the morning or noon and inform the amount of cash deposited from a particular city or sometimes the amount to be deposited in cash on that day from a particular city. The amount is then entered on the respective pages in 'thousands' i.e. '000' are to be added. If the amount is in thousand and hundreds then it is differentiated with /. For example Rs. 8800/- is written as 8/8 and in that case '00' are to be added. Then the name of the city is mentioned from where the amount is to be received. Lastly the name of the account is mentioned in code word i.e. the name of the Bank and or details of the account holder or his firm's name. After that will call the respective Shroff and inform him the account name and the name of city from where the amount is to be received and when he confirms the receipt, we put a code mark viz 'Star', Triangle' and 'X in a circle' against that entry. Different code mark has been allotted to different Shroffs. For example "Star" has been allotted to Shri Lalit Gangwani of Rajkot, 'Triangle' has been allotted to Shri Nitin Chikani of Rajkot and 'X in a circle' has been allotted to Shri Sandeep of Jamnagar. "

7.5 I have gone through the Statement of Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya, Accountant-Cum-Cashier of M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff, Morbi, recorded on 24.12.2015 under Section 14 of the Act. In the said statement, Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya, *inter alia*, deposed that,

"Q.2 Please state about business or service activities and working pattern of your firm, M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff?"

A.2 I am working as an Account-Cum Cashier in M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff, having office at 1<sup>st</sup> floor, Above Shree Ram Farsan, Chandramuli Complex, Ravapar Road, BapaSitaram Chowk, Morbi since five years. Shri Shaileshbhai Odhavjibhai Marvaniya, is the owner of M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff who is residing at "Keshav", Darpan-3, Ravapar Road, Morbi. Shri Shaileshbhai Odhavjibhai Marvaniya, is also one of the partner of M/s. Sun World Vitrified, Ghuntu Road, Rajkot, a tiles manufacturer, having share of 20%. I state that M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff is doing the business of commission agent for disbursing the cash deposited by the customers of various Tile manufacturers, Traders & Showroom located at Rajkot, throughout India, since last seven years. We are charging commission Rs.50/- to Rs.100/- per lakh from our client and varies from client to client. Our main Shroffs are M/s. Maruti Enterprises, M/s. JP Enterprise, M/s. India Enterprise & M/s. PC Enterprise, all belonged to Shri Nitinbhai of Rajkot and M/s. Ambaji Enterprise, 101 1<sup>st</sup> Floor, Sathguru Arcade, Dhebar Road, One Way, Rajkot (now closed) and M/s. K. N. Brothers, Office No. 505, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor Unicorn Centre, Near Panchnath Mandir, Main Road, Rajkot.

The procedure is that initially we take the bank account details from our main Shroff and convey the same to the tile manufacturers and also to Tiles showroom owners. These manufacturers and Tiles showroom owners in turn forward the said details to their customers located all over India, who wish to deposit cash against sale of tiles by them. The customers, as per instructions of these manufacturers and showroom owners, deposit cash in these accounts and inform them about the deposits made by them. These manufacturers and



showroom owners in turn inform us about the details of the account in which the amount has been deposited and also the amount and the city from where the amount has been deposited. We then inform the concerned Shroff, in whose account the cash amount to us in Morbi at our office and we after deducting our commission, hand over the cash to the concerned Ceramic Tiles manufacturers and Ceramic Tiles Showroom owners. I further state Shri Shaileshbhai Odhavjibhai Marvaniya used to come to our office in morning to give cash & detail statements of the parties to whom cash is to be delivered and in the evening I used to hand over day to day details of all transactions Cash Balance, Cash acknowledgement slips, Cash Book statement to Shri Shaileshbhai Ordhavjibhai Marvaniya.

Q.3. Please produce the documents / details relating to the transactions made with Shroffs and clients, Cash acknowledgement slips showing handing over cash to respective client, Cash Book Statements, Commission for the last five years of your firm M/S. Sarvodaya Shroff?

A.3. As I have been asked to produce above documents, I immediately contacted my owner Shri Shaileshbhai to hand over the documents /details as asked for submission. In turn Shri Shaileshbhai asked his nephew, Shri Chirag Rameshbhai Marvaniya, to deliver some documents to me which I produce today as detailed below.

(i) A file containing copy of statements showing detail of cash deposits in respective bank accounts, throughout India, for the period from 03.12.2015 to 19.12.2015, Rajkot office Rojmel for December'2015 Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 799.

(ii) A file containing Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 849.

(iii) A file containing Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 701.

I further state, we maintain a diary wherein entries of all transactions relating to receipts of cash from Shroffs and disbursement of the same to the respective clients with commission deducted are being shown by us. Shri Shaileshbhai keeps the diary in his own custody and every morning he gives us the same along with cash balance for making daily entries and we hand over back the diary to Shri Shaileshbhai at the end of each day. Therefore, I am not in a position to produce the same. However, I assure that I will inform my owner Shri Shaileshbhai to produce the same

I further state that in Cash Acknowledgement slip as per the direction of Shri Shaileshbhai, we used to mention the cash amount delivered in thousands viz. Rs.99,000/- would be written as "99". In the cash acknowledgement slip we used to write the name of the person along with his mobile number to whom cash delivered and on the back side we write the code name of the client representing the tiles factories / showrooms with details of amounts deposited in bank accounts at each center. The figures are also mentioned in the same pattern i.e. in thousand on each slip.

I further state that I don't know the place where Shri Shaileshbhai Odhavjibhai Marvaniya keeps details of all transactions, Cash, Cash Acknowledgement slips, Cash Book Statements etc. on everyday and where all these documents of the past period are lying. Only Shri Shaileshbhai knows about the whereabouts of the documents of the past period.



showing you the statement dated 22.12.2015 of Shri Solanki JS

Mohanlal S/o Shri Mohan Lal Solanki, Proprietor of M/s. K.N. Brothers, Office No. 505, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Unicorn Centre Near Panchnath Mandir, Main Road, Rajkot and statement dated 24.12.2015 of Shri Nitinbhai Arjanbhai Chikani, S/o Shri Arjanbhai Jadavjibhai Chikani, Block No. 403 Vasant Vihar Patidar Chowk Sadhu Vasvani Road, Rajkot. Please go through it and officer your comments.

A.8 I have gone through the statement dated 22.12.2015 of Shri Solanki JS Mohanlal S/O Shri Mohan Lal Solanki, Proprietor of M/s. K. N. Brothers, Office No. 505, 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, Unicorn Centre, Near Panchnath Mandir, Main Road, Rajkot and statement dated 24.12.2015 of Shri Nitinbhai Arjanbhai Chikani S/o Shri Arjanbhai Jadavjibhai Chikani, Block No. 403, Vasant Vihar Patidar Chowk, Sadhu Vasvani Road, Rajkot and put my dated signature in token of the correctness of the facts mentioned therein and I am in full agreement of the same.

Q.9 Please provide the details of bank accounts of main Shroffs wherein the customers of your clients deposit cash on day to day basis.

A.9. I state that Bank Account number 7933005900000048 of Punjab National Bank, Kuvadava Branch, Rajkot of our Shroff namely M/s. KN brothers; Bank Account Number 3766002100027112 to Punjab National Bank, Kalavad Road, Rajkot of our Shroff M/s. P. C. Enterprise are the accounts dedicated to our firms, wherein we instruct the clients to deposit cash by their customers on day to day basis from different locations meant to be delivered to the tiles manufacturer/show rooms of the manufactures”

7.5.1 I have also gone through the further Statement of Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya, Accountant-Cum-Cashier of M/s. Sarvodaya Shroff, Morbi, recorded on 02.01.2016 under Section 14 of the Act. In the said statement, Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya, *inter alia*, deposed that,

"Q.2. During recording your Statement dated 24.12.15, you stated that you maintain a diary for recording all transactions relating to receipts of cash from Shroffs and disbursement of the same to the respective clients. You had further stated that you would inform your owner Shri Shaileshbhai to produce the same. Please produce the same.

A.2. In this regards, I state that I had informed to Shri Shaileshbhai on the same day to handover the diary and other related records to DGCEI Office, Ahmedabad immediately. Sir, I do not know the reason why he has yet not produced the said records to your office till date.

Q.3. Please produce the documents / details relating to the transactions made with Shroffs and clients, cash acknowledgement slips showing handling over cash to respective clients, Cash book statements, commission etc. for the last five years of your firm M/a. Sarvoday Shroff.

A.3. Sir, in my statement dated 24.12.15, I have already stated that the documents / details relating to the transactions made with Shroffs and clients, Cash Acknowledgement slips showing handling over cash to respective clients, Cash book statements, commission etc. in respect of my firm M/S. Sarvoday Shroff have been kept by Shri Shaileshbhai, Owner of the firm. Further, I have already produced records which I received from Shri Chirag, nephew of Shri Shaileshbhai on 24.12.15 to your office during recording my statement. I do not have any records of the firm with me and therefore I am not in a position to produce the same.



Q.4. please peruse following files produced by you during recording your statement dated 24.12.15

(i) A file containing copy of a statements showing details of cash deposits in respective bank accounts, throughout India, for the period from 03.12.2015 to 19.12.2015, Rajkot office Rojmel for December'2015, Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 799;

(ii) A file containing Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 849;

(iii) A file containing Cash Acknowledgement Slip, containing pages from 1 to 701.

Please explain who has prepared these records.

A.4. Today, I have perused following files which I had produced during recording my statement dated 24.12.15. I state that I have prepared all cash acknowledgement slips which are available in the all three files. I have prepared these slips to record the name and details of the persons who collect cash from us, cash amount, place from where the same was deposited etc. As regards, statements showing details of cash deposits in respective bank accounts as available in File No. 1 at P. No. 31 to 55, I state that the same were prepared by M/S. K.N. Brothers and handed over to us for our record. Further, statements showing details of cash deposits in respective bank accounts as available in File No. 1 at P. No. 01 to 29, I state that the same were prepared by Shri Nitin of M/S. P.C. Enterprise and handed over to us for our record.

Q.5. Please explain and de-code entries as recorded by you in all cash acknowledgement slips produced by you

A.5. Today, I have gone through the records as produced by me. Sir, please provide me blank worksheet containing columns like S. no., Record No., Page No., date, name of the person of the manufacturer who collects the cash, name of the Ceramic Tiles manufacturer at Morbi, Actual cash handed over, City from where the was deposited, Remarks etc Please provide me sufficient amount of blank seats with basic data of first three columns. I will sit here and verify acknowledgement slips and fill up the de-coded factual data in the said blank worksheets in my own handwriting.

Q.6. Today, as requested, you are provided following three worksheets having first three columns duly filled up. Please peruse each acknowledgement slip and fill up the de-coded data in respective column and returned all seats duly signed by you.

A.6. Today, I have gone through each cash acknowledgement slips as produced by me. After going through and verification, I have filled up all the details like date, name of the person of the manufacturer who collects the cash, name of the Ceramic Tiles manufacturer at Morbi, Actual cash handed over, City from where the cash was deposited, remarks etc. in my own handwriting and as per my understanding. I hereby submit following worksheets correctly filled up and signed by me.

For File A-I- Worksheet pages from 01 to 27

For File A-I- Worksheet pages from 01 to 31 and

For File A-I- Worksheet pages from 01 to 26

8. On analyzing the documentary evidences collected during search at the office premises of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff and Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, broker/ middleman, as well as deposition made by Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani, owner of M/s K.N. Brothers, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra and Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya of M/s Sarvoday Shroff, Morbi, in their



respective Statements recorded under Section 14 of the Act, I find that customers of Appellant No. 1 had deposited cash amount in bank accounts of Shroff M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, which was converted into cash by them and handed over to Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi and M/s Sarvoday Shroff, Brokers/Middlemen, who admittedly handed over the said cash amount to Appellant No. 1.

8.1 On examining the Statements of Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani, owner of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, and Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya, it is apparent that the said Statements contained plethora of the facts, which are in the knowledge of the deponents only. For example, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra and Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya deciphered the meaning of each and every entry written in their private records seized from his premises. They also gave details of when and how much cash was delivered to which Tile manufacturer and even concerned person who had received cash amount. It is not the case that the said statements were recorded under duress or threat. Further, said statements have not been retracted. So, veracity of deposition made in said Statements is not under dispute.

8.2 I find that the Appellant No. 1 had devised such a *modus operandi* that it was almost impossible to identify buyers of goods or transporters who transported the goods. The Appellant No. 1 used to inform M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff, or Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, Middlemen, about deposit of cash in bank accounts of Shroff on receipt of communication from their buyers and such cash amount would reach to them through middlemen/brokers. When cash amount was deposited by buyers of goods in bank accounts of Shroff, the same was not reflected in bank statements, as emerging from the records. So, there was no details of buyers available who had deposited cash amount in bank accounts of Shroff. This way the Appellant No. 1 was able to hide the identity of buyers of illicitly removed goods. It is a basic common sense that no person will maintain authentic records of the illegal activities or manufacture being done by it. It is also not possible to unearth all evidences involved in the case. The adjudicating authority is required to examine the evidences on record and decide the case. The Hon'ble High Court in the case of International Cylinders Pvt Ltd reported at 2010 (255) ELT 68 (H.P.) has held that once the Department proves that something illegal had been done by the manufacturer which *prima facie* shows that illegal activities were being carried, the burden would shift to the manufacturer.







allegation is on the Department. However, clandestine removal with an intention to evade payment of duty is always done in a secret manner and not as an open transaction for the Department to immediately detect the same. Therefore, in case of clandestine removal, where secrecies involved, there may be cases where direct documentary evidence will not be available. However, based on the seized records, if the Department is able to *prima facie* establish the case of clandestine removal and the assessee is not able to give any plausible explanation for the same, then the allegation of clandestine removal has to be held to be proved. In other words, the standard and degree of proof, which is required in such cases, may not be the same, as in other cases where there is no allegation of clandestine removal.”

10. The Appellant has contended that since cross examination of Departmental witnesses were not allowed, their statements cannot be relied upon while passing the order and determining the duty amount payable by it. In this regard I find that the Appellant No. 1 had sought cross examination of Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani and Shri Jayesh Solanki of M/s K.N. Brothers, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi and Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya during the course of adjudication. The adjudicating authority denied the request of cross examination by observing in the impugned order, *inter alia*, as under:

“19.6 Further, as discussed above, all the witnesses have admitted their respective role in this case, under Section 14 of the Central Excise Act, 1944, voluntarily, which is binding on them and relied upon in the case of the noticee. Further, I find that all the witnesses have not retracted their statements. Therefore, the same are legal and valid pieces of evidence in the eyes of law. It is a settled legal position that cross examination is not required to be allowed in all cases. The denial of opportunity of cross-examination does not vitiate the adjudication proceedings. The adjudicating authority was not conducting a trial of a criminal case, but was adjudicating a SCN as to whether there has been clandestine removal of excisable goods without payment of duty. I find that the Noticee has not provided any independent evidence to show that there was no clandestine removal. In this regard, I place reliance upon the judgement of Hon'ble High Court of Madras in the case of Commissioner of Central Excise Salem Vs M/s Erode Annai Spinning Mills (Pvt.) Ltd, reported at 2019 (366) ELT647, wherein it was held that where opportunity of cross examination was not allowed, the entire proceedings will not be vitiated. ....”

10.1 I find that none of the Statements of Shroff/ Middlemen/Brokers recorded during investigation have been retracted nor there is any allegation of duress or

*dep*





memorandum. I find that as narrated in Para 3 of Show Cause Notice, summons were issued to the Appellant by the investigating authority on 22.3.2018, 24.5.2018 and 22.1.2019 but they failed to appear before the investigating authority. Thus, opportunities were given to the Appellant to explain their position. However, they chose not to avail the opportunity. It is apparent that filing affidavit after issuance of Show Cause Notice is merely an afterthought and it has no bearing on the outcome of this case.

12. The Appellant has contended that in the entire case except for so called evidences of receipt of money from the buyers of tiles through Shroff/ Middlemen/ Broker, no other evidence of manufacture of tiles, procurement of raw materials including fuel and power for manufacture of tiles, deployment of staff, manufacture, transportation of raw materials as well as finished goods, payment to all including raw material suppliers, transporters etc. in cash have been gathered. The Appellant further contended that no statement of any of buyers, transporters who transported raw materials and finished goods etc. are relied upon or even available. It is settled position of law that in absence of such evidences, grave allegations of clandestine removal cannot sustain and relied upon various case laws.

12.1 I find that the investigating officers gathered evidences from the premises of M/s K.N. Brothers, Rajkot, Shroff, or Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi, Middlemen, which indicated that Appellant No. 1 routed sales proceeds of illicitly removed goods through the said Shroff and Middlemen/Broker. The said evidences were corroborated by the depositions made by Shri Lalit Ashumal Gangwani, Owner of M/s K.N. Brothers, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, Morbi and Shri Sandipbhai Bachubhai Sanariya of M/s Sarvoday Shroff during the course of adjudication. Further, as discussed supra, Appellant No. 1 had devised such a *modus operandi* that it was difficult to identify all buyers of goods or transporters who transported the goods. In catena of decisions, it has been held that in cases of clandestine removal, it is not possible to unearth all the evidences and Department is not required to prove the case with mathematical precision. I rely on the Order passed by the Hon'ble CESTAT, Ahmedabad in the case of Apurva Aluminium Corporation reported at 1996 (261) E.L.T. 515 (Tri. Ahmd.), wherein at Para 5.1 of the order, the Tribunal has held that,

"Once again the onus of proving that they have accounted for all the goods produced, shifts to the appellants and they have failed to discharge this burden. They want the department to show challanwise details of goods transported or not transported. There are several decisions of Hon'ble Supreme Court and High Courts wherein it has been held that in such



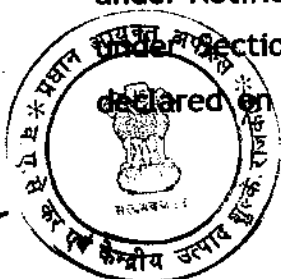
clandestine activities, only the person who indulges in such activities knows all the details and it would not be possible for any investigating officer to unearth all the evidences required and prove with mathematical precision, the evasion or the other illegal activities”.

13. Appellant No. 1 has also contended that Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, middleman/broker, has not given name of anyone of Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd. However, without any basis entries with name “Jako” are attributed to M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd from the private records of Shri Kasundra Kaka. In this regard, it is observed from Para 9.4.4 of the Show Cause Notice that during the course of investigation, Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra had revealed names of all manufacturers, including name of Appellant No.1, during decoding of diaries/ sheets maintained by him. Thus, demand is raised on the basis of documentary evidences collected from the premises of Shri Thakarshi Premji Kasundra, broker.

14. Appellant No. 1 has contended that no Statement of Directors was recorded and in absence of any statement / oral evidences or documentary evidences, demand cannot survive. In this regard, it is observed from Para 3 of the Show Cause Notice that summons were issued to the Appellant on 22.3.2018, 24.5.2018 and 22.1.2019 but they failed to appear before the investigating officers. Thus, contention raised by Appellant No. 1 is devoid of merit.

15. In view of the above, the various contentions raised by Appellant No. 1 are of no help to them and they have failed to discharge the burden cast on them that they had not indulged in clandestine removal of goods. On the other hand, the Department has adduced sufficient oral and documentary corroborative evidences to demonstrate that Appellant No. 1 indulged in clandestine removal of goods and evaded payment of Central Excise duty. I, therefore, hold that confirmation of demand of Central Excise duty amount of Rs. 24,64,783/- by the adjudicating authority is correct, legal and proper. Since demand is confirmed, it is natural consequence that the confirmed demand is required to be paid along with interest at applicable rate under Section 11AA of the Act. I, therefore, uphold impugned order to pay interest on confirmed demand.

16. The Appellant has contended that Tiles were notified at Sr. No. 58 and 59 under Notification No. 49/2008-C.E.(N.T.) dated 24.12.2008, as amended, issued under Section 4A of the Act and duty was payable on the retail sale price declared on the goods less abatement @ 45%. Though there is no evidence of



*dey*

manufacture and clearance of goods that too without declaration of RSP/MRP, duty is assessed considering the so called alleged realised value as abated value without any legal backing. The Appellant further contended that duty is to be determined as per Section 4A(4) of the Act read with Rule 4(i) of Central Excise (Determination of Retail Sale Price of Excisable Goods) Rules, 2008, which provided that highest of the RSP/MRP declared on the goods during the previous or succeeding months is to be taken for the purpose of assessment.

16.1 I find it is pertinent to examine the provisions contained in Section 4A of the Act, which are reproduced as under:

“Section 4A. Valuation of excisable goods with reference to retail sale price.-

(1) The Central Government may, by notification in the Official Gazette, specify any goods, in relation to which it is required, under the provisions of the [Legal Metrology Act, 2009 (1 of 2010)] or the rules made thereunder or under any other law for the time being in force, to declare on the package thereof the retail sale price of such goods, to which the provisions of sub-section (2) shall apply.

(2) Where the goods specified under sub-section (1) are excisable goods and are chargeable to duty of excise with reference to value, then, notwithstanding anything contained in section 4, such value shall be deemed to be the retail sale price declared on such goods less such amount of abatement, if any, from such retail sale price as the Central Government may allow by notification in the Official Gazette.”

16.2 I find that in terms of the Legal Metrology Act, 2009, retail sale price is required to be declared on packages when sold to retail customers. This would mean that when goods are sold to customers, other than retail customers, like institutional customers, the provisions of Legal Metrology Act, 2009 would not be applicable.

16.3 On examining the present case in backdrop of above provisions, I find that Appellant No. 1 has not produced any evidences that the goods were sold to retail customers. Further, as discussed above, Appellant No.1 had adopted such a modus operandi that identity of buyers could not be ascertained during investigation. Since, applicability of provisions contained in Legal Metrology Act, 2009 itself is not confirmed, it is not possible to extend benefit of abatement under Section 4A of the Act. Even if it is presumed that all the goods sold by Appellant No.1 were to retail customers then also what was realised through Shroff/Middlemen cannot be considered as MRP value for the reason that in



cases when goods are sold through dealers, realised value would be less than MRP value since dealer price is always less than MRP price.

16.4 As regards contention of Appellant No.1 that duty is to be determined as per Section 4A(4) of the Act read with Rule 4(i) of Central Excise (Determination of Retail Sale Price of Excisable Goods) Rules, 2008, I find it is pertinent to examine the provisions of Rule 4 ibid, which are reproduced as under:

“RULE 4. Where a manufacturer removes the excisable goods specified under sub-section (1) of section 4A of the Act, -

(a) without declaring the retail sale price on the packages of such goods; or

(b) by declaring the retail sale price, which is not the retail sale price as required to be declared under the provisions of the Standards of Weights and Measures Act, 1976 (60 of 1976) or rules made thereunder or any other law for the time being in force; or

(c) by declaring the retail sale price but obliterates the same after their removal from the place of manufacture,

then, the retail sale price of such goods shall be ascertained in the following manner, namely :-

(i) if the manufacturer has manufactured and removed identical goods, within a period of one month, before or after removal of such goods, by declaring the retail sale price, then, the said declared retail sale price shall be taken as the retail sale price of such goods :

(ii) if the retail sale price cannot be ascertained in terms of clause (i), the retail sale price of such goods shall be ascertained by conducting the enquiries in the retail market where such goods have normally been sold at or about the same time of the removal of such goods from the place of manufacture :

Provided that if more than one retail sale price is ascertained under clause (i) or clause (ii), then, the highest of the retail sale price, so ascertained, shall be taken as the retail sale price of all such goods.”

16.5 I find that in the present case, the Appellant No. 1 has not demonstrated as to how their case is covered by any of the situation as envisaged under sub clause (a), (b) or (c) of Rule 4 ibid. Hence, provisions of Rule 4(i) ibid is not applicable in the present case.

16.6 In view of above, plea of Appellant No. 1 to assess the goods under Section 4A of the Act cannot be accepted.

17. The Appellant has contended that all the allegations are baseless and totally unsubstantiated, therefore, question of alleged suppression of facts etc. also does not arise. The Appellant further contended that none of the situation suppression of facts, willful mis-statement, fraud, collusion etc. as stated in Section 11A(4) of the Central Excise Act, 1944 exists in the instant case but it is suppression of facts in the impugned order based on the general allegation. I find that the Appellant No. 1 was found indulging in clandestine



removal of goods and routed the cash through Shroff/Middlemen/Broker. The *modus operandi* adopted by Appellant No. 1 was unearthed during investigation carried out against them by DGCEI, Ahmedabad. Thus, this is a clear case of suppression of facts with intent to evade payment of duty. Considering the facts of the case, I am of the opinion that the adjudicating authority was justified in invoking extended period of limitation on the grounds of suppression of facts. Since invocation of extended period of limitation on the grounds of suppression of facts is upheld, penalty under Section 11AC of the Act is mandatory, as has been held by the Hon'ble Supreme Court in the case of Rajasthan Spinning & Weaving Mills reported as 2009 (238) E.L.T. 3 (S.C.), wherein it is held that when there are ingredients for invoking extended period of limitation for demand of duty, imposition of penalty under Section 11AC is mandatory. The ratio of the said judgment applies to the facts of the present case. I, therefore, uphold penalty of Rs. 24,64,783/- imposed under Section 11AC of the Act.

18. Regarding penalty imposed upon Appellants No. 2 to 5 under Rule 26 of the Rules, I find that the said Appellants were Directors of Appellant No. 1 and were looking after day-to day affairs of Appellant No.1 and were the key persons of Appellant No. 1 and were directly involved in clandestine removal of the goods manufactured by Appellant No. 1 without payment of Central Excise duty and without cover of Central Excise Invoices. They were found concerned in clandestine manufacture and removal of such goods and hence, they were knowing and had reason to believe that the said goods were liable to confiscation under the Act and the Rules. I, therefore, find that imposition of penalty of Rs. 1,50,000/- each upon Appellants No. 2 to 5 under Rule 26(1) of the Rules is correct and legal.

19. In view of above, I uphold the impugned order and reject the appeals of Appellants No. 1 to 5.

20. अपीलकर्ताओं द्वारा दर्ज की गई अपीलों का निपटारा उपरोक्त तरीके से किया जाता है।

20. The appeals filed by the Appellants are disposed off as above.

सत्यापित,



विपुल शाह  
अधीक्षक (अपीलेंस)

  
(AKHILESH KOMAR)  
Commissioner (Appeals)





By R.P.A.D.

<b>To,</b> <b>1. M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd,</b> <b>Old Ghuntu Road,</b> <b>National Highway 8A,</b> <b>Morbi.</b>	<b>सेवा में,</b> <b>मैसर्स लैंडमार्क टाइल्स प्राइवेट</b> <b>लिमिटेड,</b> <b>ओल्ड घुंटू रोड, राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग</b> <b>8ए, मोरबी।</b>
<b>2. Shri Kamlesh Laxmanbhai Jakasania,</b> <b>Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd,</b> <b>Old Ghuntu Road,</b> <b>National Highway 8A,</b> <b>Morbi.</b>	<b>श्री कमलेश लक्ष्मणभाई</b> <b>जकासानिया,</b> <b>मैसर्स लैंडमार्क टाइल्स प्राइवेट</b> <b>लिमिटेड के निदेशक,</b> <b>ओल्ड घुंटू रोड,</b> <b>राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग 8ए, मोरबी।</b>
<b>3. Shri Kailash Laxmanbhai Jakasania,</b> <b>Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd,</b> <b>Old Ghuntu Road,</b> <b>National Highway 8A,</b> <b>Morbi.</b>	<b>श्री कैलाश लक्ष्मणभाई जकासानिया,</b> <b>मैसर्स लैंडमार्क टाइल्स प्राइवेट</b> <b>लिमिटेड के निदेशक,</b> <b>ओल्ड घुंटू रोड,</b> <b>राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग 8ए, मोरबी।</b>
<b>4. Shri Kishor Sundarjibhai Jakasania,</b> <b>Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd,</b> <b>Old Ghuntu Road,</b> <b>National Highway 8A,</b> <b>Morbi.</b>	<b>श्री किशोर सुंदरजीभाई</b> <b>जकासानिया,</b> <b>मैसर्स लैंडमार्क टाइल्स प्राइवेट</b> <b>लिमिटेड के निदेशक,</b> <b>ओल्ड घुंटू रोड,</b> <b>राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग 8ए, मोरबी।</b>
<b>5. Shri Laxmanbhai Sundarjibhai</b> <b>Jakasania,</b> <b>Director of M/s Landmark Tiles Pvt Ltd,</b> <b>Old Ghuntu Road,</b> <b>National Highway 8A, Morbi.</b>	<b>श्री लक्ष्मणभाई सुंदरजीभाई</b> <b>जकासानिया,</b> <b>मैसर्स लैंडमार्क टाइल्स प्राइवेट</b> <b>लिमिटेड के निदेशक,</b> <b>ओल्ड घुंटू रोड,</b> <b>राष्ट्रीय राजमार्ग 8ए, मोरबी।</b>

प्रतिलिपि :-

- 1) मुख्य आयुक्त, वस्तु एवं सेवा कर एवं केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क, गुजरात क्षेत्र, अहमदाबाद को जानकारी हेतु।
- 2) प्रधान आयुक्त, वस्तु एवं सेवा कर एवं केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क, राजकोट आयुक्तालय, राजकोट को आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु।
- 3) सहायक आयुक्त, वस्तु एवं सेवा कर एवं केन्द्रीय उत्पाद शुल्क मण्डल मोरबी-II, राजकोट को आवश्यक कार्यवाही हेतु।
- 4) गार्ड फ़ाइल।

