

BEFORE THE ADJUDICATING OFFICER

SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA

[ADJUDICATION ORDER NO. Order/BM/UR/2022-23/25159]

UNDER SECTION 15-I OF SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF
INDIA ACT, 1992 READ WITH RULE 5 OF SEBI (PROCEDURE FOR
HOLDING INQUIRY AND IMPOSING PENALTIES) RULES, 1995.

In respect of

Late Atmaram Chandgothia
PAN: ACQPC0227K

In the matter of Trading in Illiquid Stock Options on BSE

BACKGROUND OF THE CASE

1. Securities and Exchange Board of India (hereinafter referred to as “**SEBI**”) observed large scale reversal of trades in stock options segment of Bombay Stock Exchange (hereinafter referred to as “**BSE**”). SEBI observed that such large scale reversal of trades in stock options lead to creation of artificial volume at BSE. In view of the same, SEBI conducted an investigation into the trading activities of certain entities in illiquid stock options at BSE for the period April 1, 2014 to September 30, 2015 (hereinafter referred to as “**IP**”).
2. Pursuant to investigation, it was observed that total 2,91,744 trades comprising substantial 81.40% of all the trades executed in stock options segment of BSE during the IP were non genuine trades. The aforesaid non-genuine trades resulted into creation of artificial volume in stock options segment of BSE during the IP. It was observed that Mr. Atmaram Chandgothia (PAN – ACQPC0227K)

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(hereinafter referred to as the “**Noticee**”) was one of the various entities who indulged in execution of reversal trades in stock options segment of BSE during the IP. Such trades were observed to be non-genuine in nature and created false or misleading appearance of trading in terms of artificial volumes in stock options and therefore were alleged to be manipulative, deceptive in nature. In view of the same, SEBI initiated adjudication proceedings against the Noticee for violation of the provisions of Regulations 3(a), (b), (c), (d), 4(1) and 4(2)(a) of SEBI (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trade Practices) Regulations, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as “PFUTP Regulations, 2003”).

APPOINTMENT OF ADJUDICATING OFFICER

3. Vide order dated April 30, 2021, SEBI appointed Mr. T.T.V.V.P.S. Chakravarti, General Manager as the Adjudicating Officer in exercise of powers conferred under section 19 read with Section 15-I(1) of the SEBI Act, 1992 (hereinafter referred to as “**SEBI Act, 1992**”) and Rule 3 of SEBI (Procedure for Holding Inquiry and Imposing Penalties) Rules, 1995 (hereinafter referred to as “**Adjudication Rules**”). On reassignment of the case, vide communique dated March 17, 2023, SEBI appointed the undersigned as the Adjudicating officer to conduct adjudication proceedings in the manner specified under Rule 4 of Adjudication Rules read with Section 15-I(1) and (2) of SEBI Act, 1992, and if satisfied that penalty is liable, impose such penalty deemed fit in terms of Rule 5 of Adjudication Rules and Section 15HA of SEBI Act, 1992.

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE, REPLY AND HEARING

4. A Show Cause Notice dated December 24, 2021 (hereinafter referred to as ‘**SCN**’) was issued vide SPAD to the Noticee under Rule 4(1) of the Adjudication Rules to show-cause as to why an inquiry should not be initiated against him for the alleged violation of Regulations 3(a),(b),(c),(d) and 4(1), 4(2)(a) of PFUTP Regulations, 2003 and why penalty should not be imposed under

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section 15HA of the SEBI Act, 1992 for the violations alleged to have been committed by Noticee.

5. Further, SEBI introduced SEBI Settlement scheme, 2022, pursuant to which Post SCN intimation regarding Settlement scheme dated August 03, 2022, was given to Noticee. In the Post SCN intimation, the Noticee was informed about the SEBI Settlement Scheme, 2022, in terms of regulation 26 of the Securities and Exchange Board of India (Settlement Proceedings) Regulations, 2018 in the matter of Illiquid Stock Options and in case, Noticee does not wish to avail of the facility under the SEBI Settlement Scheme, 2022, Noticee was advised to file a reply to the SCN within 30 days of the receipt of the SCN.
6. With regard to the SCN dated December 24, 2021, vide email dated May 02, 2022, Mr. Amber Chandgothia, son of the Noticee, informed about the death of the Noticee and also provided a scanned copy of the Death certificate of the Noticee, issued by Kolkata Municipal Corporation, Department of Health and Family Welfare, Government of West Bengal. The death certificate shows that the Noticee passed away on May 02, 2021. The same has also been verified through the website of Kolkata Municipal Corporation.
7. Before proceeding further in the matter on merit, it would be in the fitness of things to first decide as to whether on the death of the Noticee, the present adjudication proceedings against her would continue or abate.
8. In this regard, it is worth mentioning that in *Girijanandini Vs Bijendra Narain* (AIR 1967 SCR (1) 93), the Hon'ble Supreme Court held that in case of personal actions, i.e., the actions where the relief sought is personal to the deceased, the right to sue will not survive to or against the representatives and in such cases the maxim *actio personalis moritur cum persona* (personal action dies with the death of the person) would apply. It is also relevant to refer to the decision of Hon'ble Securities Appellate Tribunal in *Chandravadan J. Dalal vs. SEBI* (Appeal No. 35/2004 decided on June 15, 2005) wherein it was held that:

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“The appeal abates since the appellant during the pendency of the appeal died on 29th November 2004. The appeal accordingly abates. The penalty imposed on the original appellant being personal in nature also abates.”

9. In view of the foregoing, I am of the view that the instant adjudication proceedings against the Noticee are liable to be abated without going into the merits of the case qua him and the SCN dated December 24, 2021 issued against him is disposed of accordingly.
10. In terms of rule 6 of the Adjudication Rules, 1995, copy of this order is sent to the Noticee's last known address and also to SEBI.

Place: Mumbai

Date: March 29, 2023

**BARNALI MUKHERJEE
ADJUDICATING OFFICER**