

**BEFORE THE ADJUDICATING OFFICER
SECURITIES AND EXCHANGE BOARD OF INDIA
ADJUDICATION ORDER NO.: Order/VA/JT/2022-23/22974**

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

In respect of:
Late Ms. Geeta Devi Agarwal
PAN: ADNPA4711E

In the matter of dealings in Illiquid Stock Options at the Bombay Stock Exchange

BACKGROUND

1. Securities and Exchange Board of India (hereinafter referred to as "SEBI") observed large scale reversal of trades in the Stock Options segment of the Bombay Stock Exchange (hereinafter referred to as "BSE") leading to the alleged creation of artificial volume in the stock options segment. In this regard, SEBI conducted an investigation into the trading activity in the illiquid Stock Options segment at the BSE for the period April 01, 2014 to September 30, 2015 (hereinafter referred to as "Investigation Period").
2. It was observed during the course of investigation that a total of 2,91,744 trades comprising 81.40% of all the trades executed in the Stock Options Segment at the BSE during the investigation period were trades which involved reversal of buy and sell positions by the clients and counterparties in a contract on the same day. It was observed that Geeta Devi Agarwal (hereinafter referred to as "Noticee") was one such client whose reversal trades involved squaring off open positions with a significant difference without any basis for such change in the contract price. The aforesaid reversal trades allegedly resulted into generation of artificial volumes, leading to allegations that the Noticee had violated the provisions of regulations 3(a),(b),(c),(d) and regulations 4(1),4(2)(a) of the SEBI (Prohibition of Fraudulent and Unfair Trading Practices related to Securities Markets) Regulations, 2003 (hereinafter referred to as "PFUTP Regulations, 2003").

APPOINTMENT OF ADJUDICATING OFFICER

3. SEBI initiated adjudication proceedings and appointed the undersigned as Adjudicating Officer under section 15-I of the Securities and Exchange Board of India Act, 1992 (hereinafter referred to as "SEBI Act") read with rule 3 of the SEBI (Procedure for Holding Inquiry and Imposing Penalties) Rules, 1995 (hereinafter referred to as

“Adjudication Rules”) vide order dated September 20, 2021 to inquire into and adjudge under section 15HA of the SEBI Act against the Noticee for the alleged violation of the aforesaid provisions of PFUTP Regulations, 2003.

SHOW CAUSE NOTICE, REPLY AND HEARING

4. A Show Cause Notice bearing reference no. SEBI/HO/ISD/ISD_ISD/P/OW/2022/9220/1 dated March 09, 2022 (hereinafter referred to as “SCN”) was issued to the Noticee under Rule 4(1) of the Adjudication Rules to show cause as to why an inquiry should not be initiated against the Noticee and why penalty should not be imposed upon the Noticee under Section 15HA of the SEBI Act for the violations alleged to have been committed by the Noticee. The SCN was issued by speed post and as per the records available from the website of India Post, the SCN was delivered on March 15, 2022. A copy of the communique dated September 27, 2021 appointing Adjudicating Officer, was also provided along with the SCN.
5. The undersigned was informed by Mr. Praveen Agarwal, son of Noticee, vide letter dated March 29, 2022 received on April 19, 2022, that the Noticee had passed away on September 04, 2016 and it was requested that the adjudication proceedings against her be disposed of. A notarized copy of the death certificate dated September 27, 2016 issued by Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Rajasthan was submitted along with the said letter. From the certificate issued by the Directorate of Economics & Statistics, Government of Rajasthan, I note that the Noticee has expired on September 04, 2016 and the death was registered in records on September 26, 2016, bearing registration no. 08110001000062701439/2016. The death certificate was also verified from the website, pehchan.raj.nic.in, by using the registration number mentioned in the certificate.
6. Thus, the proceedings are against the acts of omission and commission of person who is no more to face the charges. In this regard, it is relevant to note that the Hon’ble Supreme Court in the case of *Girija Nandini vs. Bijendra Narain* (AIR 1967 SC 1124), *inter-alia*, observed that in case of personal action, 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: “*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.”

7. In the matter under consideration, the Noticee expired before the issuance of SCN. Therefore, I am of the view that the adjudication proceedings initiated against the Noticee do not survive and are liable to be abated without going into the merits of the case. Consequently, no penalty is imposed on the Noticee who is deceased and the Adjudication Proceedings against the Noticee stand abated.

ORDER

8. After taking into consideration all the facts and circumstances of the case, the Adjudication Proceedings initiated against the Noticee, viz. Late Geeta Devi Agarwal (PAN- ADNPA4711E), vide SCN bearing reference no. SEBI/HO/ISD/ISD_ISD/P/OW/2022/9220/1 dated March 09, 2022 are disposed of.
9. In terms of Rule 6 of the Adjudication Rules, a copy of this order is sent to the Noticee's last known address as well as to the address of Mr. Praveen Agarwal, who informed SEBI about the demise of the Noticee and also to SEBI.

DATE: January 20, 2023

VERSHA AGARWAL

PLACE: MUMBAI

ADJUDICATING OFFICER