

Supreme Court of India

Basant Industries vs C.C.E on 9 December, 1994

Equivalent citations: 1995 SCC (1) 534, JT 1995 (1) 152

Author: R Sahai

Bench: Sahai, R.M. (J)

PETITIONER:

BASANT INDUSTRIES

Vs.

RESPONDENT:

C.C.E.

DATE OF JUDGMENT 09/12/1994

BENCH:

SAHAI, R.M. (J)

BENCH:

SAHAI, R.M. (J)

MAJMUDAR S.B. (J)

CITATION:

1995 SCC (1) 534 JT 1995 (1) 152

1994 SCALE (5) 181

ACT:

HEADNOTE:

JUDGMENT:

The Judgment of the Court was delivered by R.M. SAHAI, J.- Whether oil-driven pumps sold by the appellant were exempt under Notification No. 85/72 dated 17- 3-1972 or they were assessable to duty under Item 30-A of the Central Excise Tariff is the short question that arises for consideration in this appeal directed against order passed by the Customs, Excise and Gold (Control) Appellate Tribunal, New Delhi.

2.The appellant, a partnership firm registered under the Indian Partnership Act, was engaged in the manufacture of combustion and diesel engines bearing brand name "Atul Shakti" for which it was duly licensed under the Central Excises and Salt Act, 1944 ('Act' for short). It also carried on trading in pumps. It entered into agreements with different units who were duly licensed under the Act for manufacturing pumps and power-driven pumps. In October 1977 the appellant was served with a show-cause notice by the Central Excise Department that they got the power-driven pumps manufactured with brand name "Atul Shakti" from different manufacturing units who in fact were

manufacturing these pumps on behalf of the appellant. In reply it was stated that the appellant had given raw materials to independent units who were not under control or direction of the appellant. According to the appellant, on the raw material supplied by it the independent units had manufactured according to specification given by the appellant. Therefore, the work carried on by the independent units could not be deemed to be on behalf of the appellant and the appellant could not be denied the benefit of exemption under Notification No. 85/72. The Tribunal did not agree even though it held that the appellant had no control over manufacturing process and the manufacturing parties but what persuaded the Tribunal to take the view against the appellant was that it found that the appellant sent components in the shape of castings which by a little machining and grinding became pumps. Therefore, even though the manufacturing units were independent, yet it did not make any difference in law as the pumps having been manufactured on behalf of the appellant it was not entitled to exemption. The Tribunal further held that if the claim of the appellant that it had only supplied the raw material was found to be correct, probably there would have been no difficulty in accepting its claim but from the material it transpired that the appellant had supplied components of pumps and this was done in order to get over the legal difficulty and claim exemption under the excise notification. The Tribunal further found that some of the independent units charged a sum of Rs 10 per pump. It was demonstrative of the fact that the amount was so ridiculously low that no independent unit manufactures a pump for such a low cost.

3. The exemption under Notification No. 85/72 dated 17-3-1972 was available for power-driven pumps if the value did not exceed rupees one lakh. This restriction was extended even if the pumps were got manufactured by others. In other words if value of the pumps sold by the appellant did not exceed rupees one lakh whether manufactured by the appellant or on its behalf by others then only it was entitled to exemption. The appellant had cleared goods which exceeded rupees one lakh in the years in dispute. Therefore, it was not entitled to exemption unless the value of pumps manufactured by different parties under the agreement was excluded from its clearance. The appellant did not dispute that it supplied castings, pump tape, shafts, impeller etc. to the manufacturer. The question, therefore, that arose was whether the pumps brought out of all this resulted in manufacture. This word was explained by the Constitution Bench in *Ujagar Prints v. Union of India*¹. It was held that the test to determine leviability under the Act is whether a new commercial commodity has emerged. Since the goods which were manufactured by different units on raw material supplied by the appellant was a new commercial commodity it cannot be said that it did not amount to manufacture. And that was not the dispute in the show-cause notice which called upon the appellant to explain as to why the duty may not be levied on it as it was manufactured on its behalf. The ambit of controversy thus was not so much whether pumps were manufactured by different parties but whether it was manufactured on appellant's behalf. The Tribunal in this regard found it as fact that the appellant had no control either over the manufacturing process or manufacturing parties. Once the Tribunal recorded this finding it misdirected itself in entering into the question whether the pumps manufactured by third parties was mere assembling on 1 (1989) 3 SCC 488 : 1989 SCC (Tax) 469 raw material or component supplied by the appellant or it was manufacture. Even assuming that what was supplied was component, but that by itself was not sufficient to fasten liability on the appellant. The component unless processed did not result in production of pump. And that having been done by independent units for payment the finding that it was manufactured on behalf of the appellants without any material cannot be upheld. In fact, no

such finding has been recorded by the Tribunal nor any material could be pointed out which could establish that it was the appellant who manufactured the pumps or the independent units from whom it got the pumps manufactured were doing so on behalf of the appellant. The Tribunal in extending the meaning of the expression 'manufacturing' on behalf of the appellant by introducing the concept of supply of components went beyond the ambit of the notification.

4. In the result, this appeal succeeds and is allowed. The order passed by the Tribunal is set aside. The question of law raised by the appellant is decided by saying that the oil-driven pumps sold by the appellant having not been manufactured by it it was entitled to claim exemption under Notification No. 85/72 dated 17-3-1972.