

# Exhaustion of Trademark Right and Parallel Importation

Saurabh Suman, Sakshi snehi  
School of Law , KIIT UNIVERSITY , Patia , Bhubaneswar  
Odisha, India

---

## ABSTRACT:

Exhaustion of trade mark rights mean when the owner/proprietor of a trade mark sold or transfers its rights to any other persons that moment only the owner/proprietor losses its rights to that certain product or good. And that right which he holds is transferred and started to being exercised with the new owner/proprietor. There are certain rights that an owner of registered trademark holder holds which make him/her different from the others people who poses to be owner of trademark but they are not registered. The rights which a trademark holder/owner enjoys are rights provided by the registrar of trademark.

Parallel Imports is also known as grey market goods. Parallel imports referred as when the registered product is sold in other country market without the consent of the owner of that product those products are original product they are not counterfeit product. This is occurring because of the higher price of that product in the other country. The seller/exporter will sell that product relatively cheaper than the price of the owner if he is selling in that country. The seller or exporter will purchase good from the home country of the owner and will sell it in other country where the price of that good is much more higher or whether that product is not available in other country.

Keyword: Exhaustion, Trademark, Rights, Parallel importation, Proprietor

---

## I. INTRODUCTION

The idea of parallel importation is a continually developing wonder in the current globalized world. Parallel importation alludes to a circumstance where the proprietor of the trademark has not given its agree to import its trademarked products to a specific region. There might be a few reasons with reference to why this sort of marvel happens, however ordinarily the most well-known reason is the price. It ought to be noticed that these products are certifiable trademarked products, however there are reasons why parallel imports might be viewed as hazardous. A firmly associated idea with parallel imports is the principle of trademark exhaustion. It can be seen that the way to deal with parallel imports will incredibly rely upon how a nation manages the topic of trademark exhaustion. There are no less than three conceivable perspectives to this idea: national, local and international. In the national approach, the privileges of the owner of the trademark are believed to be depleted just in that particular domestic domain where the trademarked products are put by the owner or with his or her assent. The proprietor of the trademark has more noteworthy flexibility to choose whether to put his trademarked products in various states or not. International exhaustion of trademarks adopts a contrary strategy in examination with the national approach, as the select privileges of the trademark proprietor to the trademarked product are depleted internationally (the proprietor of the trademark can't restrict the importation

of his trademarked products into different conditions of the world). It can be expressed that the international exhaustion advances all the more productively the free development of merchandise inside international exchange contrasted with the national approach. In any case, those states that don't acknowledge the principle of international exhaustion may not acknowledge these internationally depleted products to their domain if the trademark proprietor does not give his assent. As indicated by provincial exhaustion, the privileges of the trademark proprietor are depleted in the entire locale or group when the trademarked products are set in one condition of the group. The trademark proprietor can't contradict to parallel imports originating from another state inside the group. Be that as it may, the trademark proprietor may control the trademarked products originating from outside the group. A case of a territorial group that applies the administer of local exhaustion of trademarks is the EU. Trademark can be viewed as a restraining infrastructure which ensures the trademark itself and its proprietor's desires. The principle of exhaustion of trademarks is viewed as a constraint to these privileges of the trademark proprietor. A proportional name for this regulation of exhaustion of trademarks that mirrors the above thought is apropos the "main deal principle". There can be a circumstance in which after a trademarked product enters the commercial center and a consumer gains it, this consumer may uninhibitedly choose whether to resale the product or even crush it. Nonetheless, contingent upon the perspective of national, territorial or international exhaustion of trademarks, this trademarked product might be depleted just in a specific region. This implies, for example, that the products that are depleted just in one nation may not be foreign made to another nation without the assent of the trademark proprietor. Since there is a nearby connection with the ideas of trademark exhaustion and parallel imports, the two ideas might be appropriately examined. Hence, this article expects to investigate the firmly related ideas of trademark exhaustion and parallel imports. As a viable device, similar approach might be utilized as a part of request to recognize the methodologies of the EU and the USA to the ideas of trademark exhaustion and parallel imports, the advantages and shortcomings of these methodologies, and investigate why these business sectors have touched base at specific conclusions. Normally, consumers need to have the best quality trademarked products at a low price. In the event that parallel imports are for sure offering lower prices for the consumers and that way profiting them, it can be asked, for instance, why there is even a probability for trademark proprietors to restrict parallel imports in specific circumstances. Along these lines, the subject of trademark exhaustion, and therefore the way to deal with parallel imports, is progressively pertinent From the EU point of view, the Directive 2008/95/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 October 2008 to surmised the laws of the Member States identifying with exchange marks is significant so as to better comprehend what a trademark is-

1. According to Article 2 of the EU TM Directive, "an exchange check may comprise of any signs fit for being spoken to graphically, especially words, including individual names, outlines, letters, numerals,

the state of products or of their bundling, gave that such signs are equipped for recognizing the merchandise or administrations of one endeavor from those of other undertakings."

2. It is relevantly expressed in Recital 11 of this EU TM Directive that a trademark is, or ought to be, there to ensure the sign of birthplace. Trademarks are not insignificant but rather they have their own particular capacities; from a consumer's point of view, trademarks are vital when settling on a purchasing choice, they fill in as a confirmation that the product is of the quality that the consumers have been utilized to, trademark implies that the trademark proprietor puts resources into the trademark itself keeping in mind the end goal to make it known. These sorts of investments of the trademark proprietors merit insurance, which then again makes the topic of trademark exhaustion and parallel imports especially troublesome.

## II. EXHAUSTION OF TRADEMARK RIGHTS IN INDIA

The Division Bench of the High Court of Delhi says it is, in the wake of having decided for "International Exhaustion" in case of *Kapil Wadhwa versus Samsung Electronics Ltd.*<sup>1</sup>, recent case accessible on the Doctrine of Exhaustion in India. So the heap of exclusive rights allowed to a trademark holder does not appear to incorporate the way that they can't limit parallel importer of those products who abuse this doctrine to benefit themselves.

Parallel imports, as one may know, is genuine marked goods (yes, they are not fake products), that are not expected for a specific Country according to the desires of the trademark proprietor, are at any rate imported into that Country by unauthorized dealers at less rates and are sold in the Country keeping pace with current market rate of the said item; subsequently, exploiting the doctrine of exhaustion.

## III. WHAT IS THIS DOCTRINE OF EXHAUSTION?

Doctrine of Exhaustion essentially implies that a owner of a specific good stops to have control over further offer of his goods once he has made a valid transfer of sale. At the end of the day, if the trademarked goods are once put available by the proprietor or by his assent, and once obtained truly, the trademark proprietor or any one getting his title from him can't avoid offer of such great, as the selective appropriate to offer merchandise bearing the stamp is 'depleted' by the principal deal; at that point the elite ideal to offer products bearing the check can't be practiced twice in regard of similar merchandise. Consequently, this doctrine is generally called as the doctrine of first deal. In addition, there are diverse methods of exhaustion too, which are perceived internationally.

---

<sup>1</sup> (2013 (53) PTC 112 (Del.)

- **Doctrine of International exhaustion** takes a shot at the assumption that the entire world is one market or one nation and accordingly merchandise once sold in any piece of such market or nation works as exhaustion of privileges of the trademark proprietor over such products.
- **Doctrine of Regional exhaustion** is when goods having a trademark are first sold by or with the assent of the proprietor in any Country, which is a piece of a particular region, at that point the proprietor can't avert resulting sale in his own particular Country or in whatever other Country which likewise is a piece of that specific region. The European Union has embraced regional exhaustion
- **Doctrine of National exhaustion** Stipulates that once a product been sold in the local business sector for those To begin with the long run Eventually perusing or for those assent of the owner, to which he need accepted a consideration, he that point ceases to have control through any ensuing bargain of the same in the Domestic market, in the sense, he might not prevent ensuing bargain of the said result or could he case whatever benefit emerging from An resulting deal or camwood he sude to encroachment for as much trademark. The method of reasoning behind this guideline is that the holder need generally determined a benefit emerging out of the to begin with sale; hence, he can't stay with inferring benefit crazy of a deal that might have been not made toward him.

#### IV. CURRENT POSITION IN INDIA:

Section 30 sub-clauses (3) and (4)[1] of the Indian Trademarks Act,<sup>2</sup> deals with the exhaustion of rights after first sale of goods. From a cursory reading of the same, one would deduce that the intention of the legislature was to recognize domestic exhaustion only.

In the case involving parallel imports and trademarks, the Plaintiffs were successful in getting an *ex parte* order directing the Customs authorities to notify all ports to bar imports of defendant's goods.

In another case tried by the Delhi High Court, an *ex parte* injunction was granted to the plaintiff thereby preventing the defendant from importing genuine Samsung products into India from China.

The most recent case is that of *Kapil Wadhwa vs. Samsung Electronics Ltd.*<sup>3</sup>, where the High Court of Delhi has ruled otherwise on the basis that the scope of the expression 'the market' in Section 30 (3)<sup>4</sup> is not limited to domestic markets.

- **So, should India recognize national or international exhaustion?**

---

<sup>2</sup> Indian Trademark Act of 1999.

<sup>3</sup> Supra note1

<sup>4</sup> Supra note2

When a section is as clear as Section 30(3), the words of the section must be given their plain, ordinary and literal meaning. So, when the section says sale of goods ‘in the market’, it must be interpreted to mean sale of goods ‘in India’, concerning illustration generally it will provide for a ticket to Any individual should buy products from Indian business Furthermore offer it anyplace in the around the world market. Also, eventually perusing an unimportant perusing of the opening expressions “where the products bearing an enlisted trade mark are legally procured by a person” obviously reflects that those said procurement will be inside the local business sector. On other words, if those trademark is registered previously, you quit offering on that one Country, afterward products bearing the said enlisted trademark legally procured from that particular nation best.

Moreover, confining parallel imports under those nation over will bring about disposal of the perplexity initiated around the individuals classes of purchasers who are taking a gander should purchase all the the certified result intended to that nat. Also, it will for the most part profit neighborhood licensees about that nation.

An equalization must be struck the middle of the two workable clashing arrangement objectives, the place on one hand parallel imports profit those consumers What's more Push organized commerce and rivalry with expand supply of merchandise during easier prices, on the other hand, so as should draw in outside immediate Furthermore backhanded investment, prohibition of sure manifestations of rival if a chance to be completed. It will a chance to be fascinating with view the Court’s last position on the issue.

## **V. PARALLEL IMPORTATION**

Parallel importing will be a type of international trade that is referred as the “gray market.” a result it will be a gray area it need a few particular cases What's more demonstrating thereabouts that know party need aid mindful from claiming its implying also get it its legality.

Parallel importation will be an unapproved import under a nation for non-counterfeit products foreign without the express reasonably of the intellectual holder. People allude should this Similarly as gray business goods, Also the vast majority trades involve high-weight marked products for example, such that jewelry, cameras, tablets, and watches.

## **VI. THE LEGALITY OF PARALLEL IMPORTATION**

- **International Laws on Parallel Imports**

Since the ‘Paris Convention’ and the ‘Berne Convention are silent on the affair of parallel importation, added international treaties may access domestic law on this point. The best important one in the feild of intellectual

property is the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights assured in 1994 as a amalgamation calm with the GATT/WTO Agreement. Indeed, it would be accepted from a Treaty accoutrement all aspects of intellectual property rights that the amount of alongside access is additionally included. Not so. Although it was recognized that alongside access would absolutely fit accurately aural the cold of all-embracing charge less barter advocated by GATT, agreement could not be accomplished to acquiesce about for alongside importation. In adjustment to affected this stalemate situation, Art. 6 of the TRIPs Agreement now provides that for the purposes of dispute adjustment beneath this Agreement, ... nothing... shall be acclimated to abode the affair of burnout of intellectual property right . The dispute settlement apparatus in accepted allows every affiliate to accompany an activity adjoin addition accompaniment if there is bereft acquiescence with the attempt of the GATT/WTO Acceding in general. Yet according to Art. 6, whatever civic attitude is taken on the amount of exhaustion, no complaint can be heard in this respect. While this absolutely agency that no country can be put in the berth for chief for or adjoin all-embracing exhaustion, it does not necessarily beggarly that the TRIPs Agreement as such would not favour either one or the other position.

- **Indian Law on Parallel Imports**

In India, parallel importation is complicatedly connected to the rule of depletion of rights under the Trademarks Act,<sup>5</sup>. The guideline of fatigue of rights is cherished in Article 6 of the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPs), which expresses that "nothing in this Agreement will be utilized to address the issue of the weariness of intellectual property rights". Consequently, each state is qualified either for restrict or to permit parallel imports inside its very own legal system.

One of the first cases concerning parallel importation and trademark law in India was *Cisco Technologies v Shrikanth*<sup>6</sup>, in which the Delhi High Court granted an *ex parte* injunction in favour of the Cisco Technologies and restrained the defendant from importing computer hardware and hardware components under the trademark CISCO<sup>7</sup> (which was registered in India). The plaintiff argued that:

CISCO items, for example, routers and switches are mission and human basic hardware parts utilized in network foundation; that the result of the Plaintiff is utilized in basic networks, for example, railroads, aviation authority, healing centers, air resistances and so forth.; that breaking down/disappointment of the result of the Plaintiff would result in colossal misfortunes because of disappointment of these networks; that keeping in view the basic importance of the item being referred to, it winds up basic to guarantee that neither fake deals nor deals by deception happen... and that open intrigue must be remembered while deciding the issue whether ex-pare and interim relief should stream to the Plaintiff at this stage.

---

<sup>5</sup> Supra note2

<sup>6</sup>2006 (31) PTC 538.

<sup>7</sup> Corps Information system control officer

In accepting the plaintiff's arguments, the court also observed that:

It is the obligation of all statutory and governmental authorities to ensure that laws are not violated by any person in this country. For persons who hold benefit of registered trademarks, Section 140 of the Trade Mark Act, makes statutory provisions where under the Collector of Customs could prohibit the importation of goods if the import thereof would infringe Section 29(vi)(c) of the Trade Marks Act. I see no reasoning behind why the statutory authority ought not restrict import of such items, import whereof would result or abet in the infringement of the exclusive enthusiasm of a man in a trademark/trade name.

The court likewise issued headings to Customs to inform at all ports that no transfers, other than those of the plaintiff, ought to be allowed to be transported in regard of routers, switches or cards bearing the CISCO trademark as well as the scaffold gadget.

In *Kapil Wadhva v Samsung Electronics*<sup>8</sup>, the Delhi High Court Division Bench reinforced the legality of parallel imports and held that the Trademarks Act enshrines the principle of international exhaustion of rights. At the end of the day, it held that the exclusive right of a trademark proprietor over its products is depleted once the merchandise have been put on the market either by the trademark proprietor or with its assent. The court held, in addition to other things, that the word 'market' used in the rule infers a worldwide market, and that the preliminary attempts to the Trademark Bill 1999 obviously demonstrate the goal of the legislature to perceive the principle of international exhaustion of rights to control further sales of the merchandise once they have been put on the market by the trademark proprietor.

In Marlboro case, while upholding the international exhaustion principle, The Delhi High Court lays the burden of proving that the initial purchase of the trademarked good was legal on the importer: "The defendant needs to demonstrate that the reprovved merchandise, bearing a specific trademark, were put in any market worldwide by the registered proprietor of the said trademark or with its assent and from that point, the defendant lawfully obtained them consequently."

- **Indian Customs Law on Parallel Imports**

Indian customs law also includes provisions on parallel importation. According to the 2012 Central Board of Excise & Customs Circular on Enforcement of Intellectual Property Rights on Imported Goods, parallel importation is not prohibited unless:

1. the goods bear a false trademark as specified in Section 102 of the Trademarks Act; or

---

<sup>8</sup>Supra note 1.

2. The goods bear a false trade description within the meaning of Section 2(1)(i), in relation to any of the matters connected to the description, statement or other indications of the product, excluding those specified in Sections 2(1)(ii) and (iii)<sup>9</sup>.

This marked a clear departure from the Intellectual Property Rights (Imported Goods) Enforcement Rules 2007, which provided that where a trademark owner notified the customs authorities in the prescribed format requesting that clearance of goods suspected of infringing its rights be suspended, and this notice was duly registered by the customs authorities, the import of all goods bearing the infringing trademark would be suspended and proceedings for confiscation of the goods would be initiated under Section 111(d) of the Customs Act. The confiscated goods were eventually required to be destroyed or disposed of outside normal channels of commerce with the trademark owner's consent.

## VII. CONCLUSION

Starting with the thing that might a chance to be understood, those primary weakness about parallel import will be that it advertises free trade and Urges competition, other than encouraging trademarked or certified merchandise with be accessible In separate prices, permitting those consumers will bring an alternative to purchase all the honest to goodness merchandise at An less expensive value. What could additionally make caught on is that assuming that parallel Imports need aid finished away with, the Producers will bring their benefits of the business monopolies, prompting products constantly accessible during higher costs. Additionally consumers must note that parallel Imports might guarantee more level priced results However they might not get those quality, administration or fulfillment which they required over psyche same time purchasing the specific product, also in turn referred to reality continuously that parallel Imports prompts an enormous misfortune about income of the trademark holder because of those import from claiming 'grey goods'

The legislature certainly here must intercede in this matter to maintain balance between the hobbies of the purchasers and trademark Holders, something like that that nobody will be toward a higher danger. Eventually How the money adds up will be that the choice once if to permit parallel Imports will be a decision the choice between quality control and price control; between the investment greater part, however overlook trademark managers and customer access; between trade monopolies and free trade.

---

<sup>9</sup> Supra note2