Circular No. 23/95
dated 21/3/95

F.No. 450/116/92-Cus. IV

Government of India
Ministry of Finance
Department of Revenue
Central Board of Excise & Customs

Subject : Sale of books from shipping vessels in port - reg-

I am directed to say that the Board has been receiving requests on an annual basis from certain foreign shipping vessels for permission for sale of bools on broad the vessels while the same is docked at an Indian port. This permission has hitherto been given by the Board subject to the vessel obtaining the required no objection from the concerned authorities such as the Ministry of Surface Transport, Ministry of Home Affairs, Reserve Bank of India etc.

2. The matter has been examined by the Board and it is noticed that the foreign vessels applying for permission to sell books on board the vessel to the visiting public at each port of call in India are essentially floating book shops. In contrast to the normal procedure where the books are first cleared for home consumption and then sold in the local market, the books are proposed to be sold direct to the public on board the vessel itself. Therefore, the books will be cleared for home consumption on a day to day basis by individual public members. As this facility has been sought on year to year basis at various ports in India, it is considered appropriate to evolve a uniform procedure in this regard.

3. In this context I am directed to say that the Board has decided that the grant of permission for sale of books on board foreign vessel in the port is a matter within the competence of jurisdictional Collector of Customs. Hence, a reference to the Board is not required any more. This permission will however, be given by the Collector subject to the understanding that the master of the vessel obtains the requisite statutory clearances from other concerned Department / Bodies.

4. The procedures to be followed once the permission of sale of books on board the vessel has been granted by the Collector of Customs is that upon completion of the other formalities such as filing import general manifest, the Preventive officer concerned will board the vessel for examination of the books in stock. Such books which are found objectionable or contrary to the provisions of law regarding their importability (including books showing incorrect external boundaries of India) will be segregated and sealed. These shall not be permitted for display or sale.

5. All other books cleared for sale may be displayed on board the vessel to the visiting public. On a daily basis the details of the looks sold to the public will be submitted to the customs and at the end of the sale period, before the vessel sails for the next destination, a consolidated Bill of entry will be filed for the sum total of the books sold during the period of stay of the vessel. This Bill of Entry will be assessed on merits keeping in mind the ITC formalities also.

6. Where it is proposed to obtain local books from India for sale on board the vessel, a similar procedure as detailed above will be followed, and before the vessel sails for the next destination a shipping bill will be filed for the number of books on board the vessel indicating specifically the books sold at the particular port.

7. It is requested that the aforesaid decision of the Board with reference to sale of books on board foreign vessels may be implemented with immediate effect by issue of suitable Departmental Order/ Standing Order No. doubt, it will be ensured that the activities relating to movement of books in and out of the port and its sale on board the vessel will be under the general supervision of the officers of the Customs. Suitable Public Notice/ Trade Notice may also be issued for information of Trading Public.

Sd/-
(S.M. Bhatnagar)
Under Secretary to the Government of India

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