



## CITING TRADITIONAL MEDICINAL PRACTICES

## Colgate's attempt to patent nutmeg mouthwash foiled

**Vanita Srivastava**

■ letters@hindustantimes.com

**NEW DELHI:** India has foiled an attempt by consumer goods giant Colgate-Palmolive to patent a mouthwash formula containing herb extracts by citing ancient texts that show it was traditionally used in ancient medicinal practices.

The multinational submitted an application in 2011 to patent an oral composition containing extracts of *Myristica Fragrans* or

nutmeg but an update on its status last month showed it was deemed to have been withdrawn.

This came after the **Traditional Knowledge Digital Library (TKDL)**, a unit of the government's science regulator **Council of Scientific & Industrial Research (CSIR)**, submitted proof in the form of references from ancient books, which said the herb and its extracts were used for oral diseases in Indian systems of medicine. In addition, other third party observations also made submissions

**THE LIBRARY ALSO  
SUBMITTED RELEVANT  
EVIDENCE IN PRINTED  
BOOKS OF THE UNANI AND  
AYURVEDA BRANCHES OF  
INDIAN MEDICINE**

against the claims.

"There are several references where *Myristica fragrans* and some others were used alone or in combination to eliminate

bad breath, teeth strengthening, treatment of gingivitis, fissures of the tongue and palate, diseases of the mouth and excess salivation. These herbs were also used for dryness of the mouth, diseases of the pharynx, lips, tongue and teeth," **TKDL** said in its observations.

The library also submitted relevant evidence in printed books of the Unani and Ayurveda branches of Indian medicine, including texts from *Caraka-Samhita* (1000BC-4th century) and *Qarabaadeen-Najm-al-Ghani* (20th century AD).