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British firm's bid to patent ginger foiled

Kounteya Sinha | TNN

New Delhi: India has foiled an attempt by a British pharmaceutical company to claim a patent on using ginger for the treatment of cough and cold.

While Indians have been gulping down steaming 'adrak chai' through generations as a standard home remedy, Nicholas John Larkins, London, filed a patent application (GB2436063) titled "Pharmaceutical composition for the treatment of excess mucous production" on March 16, 2006 at the British patent office. The company claimed that the usefulness of ginger (*Zingiber officinale*) and kutki plant (*Picrorhiza*

Remedy Rebound

▶ British pharma firm files for patent in 2006, claiming it **discovered use of ginger and kutki plant** in treatment of cold

▶ India cited **medicinal texts dating back to the 18th century** on use of ginger to treat cough, asthma & lung diseases

▶ British patent office accepts Indian evidence, **throws out application** 5 years later

kurroa) for the treatment of cough and lung diseases was its novel and unique finding.

The **department of AYUSH** and **Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR)** intervened and provided evidence from age-old ayurveda and unani books, dating back to the 18th century that

talked about ginger and kutki being used alone or in combination with other ingredients to treat cough, bronchial asthma and lung diseases. "Within two weeks of India providing evidence, the five-year-old attempt to pirate India's traditional medicinal knowledge was struck down by the UK patent office in 2011," a health ministry official said.

The books that were referred to as evidence by **CSIR** included *Ilaaj-al-Amraaz* (18th century), *Bhaisajya Ratnavali* and *Bharata Bhaisajya Ratnakara* (1000 BC), *Bayaaz-e-Kabir* (1938 AD), *Muheet-e-Azam* (19th century) and *Khazaain-al-Advia* from the 20th century.