Fungi are the group of eukaryotic microorganisms that are ubiquitously present in the environment. Oral fungi that are found in the oral cavity co-exist as commensals in a healthy individual. But when the immunity of the individual takes a hit, these oral fungi turn opportunistic and become pathogenic. One of the most common examples is the occurrence of candidiasis in HIV-infected individuals. Candidal fungi, particularly species like albicans and glabrata are known to cause severe debilitating lesions in persons with immunosuppression.

India is a land of rich diversity and culture. She is the birthplace of renowned ancient medicinal systems like Ayurveda and Siddha which use the traditional and native plant parts like herbs, seeds and leaves for curing innumerable diseases which were lost-causes in the modern allopathic medicine. The good part is that many of these herbs and condiments are part of the daily diet of Indian people.

This study tends to utilize the rich dietary and medical heritage of India to tackle the oral fungal diseases through the evaluation of the anti-fungal property of Terminalia chebula (Kadukkai in Tamil).

T. chebula has been shown to increase appetite and acts as digestive aid, liver stimulant, gastrointestinal prokinetic agent, and mild laxative. The powder of T. chebula fruits has been used in chronic diarrhea. It is also used in nervous weakness and nervous irritability.

In this study, the powder of T. chebula was made into an extract and its anti-fungal property was evaluated against Candida albicans and Candida glabrata.

The ulterior motive of this study, if its results are validated further, is to establish T. chebula as a routine anti-fungal agent for oral fungal lesions.

Keywords
Kadukkai; Terminalia chebula, Candida