INTRODUCTION

Nature always stands as golden mark to exemplify the outstanding phenomenon of symbiosis. The plants are indispensable to man for his life. The three important necessities of life – food, clothing and shelter are supplied by plant kingdom. Nature has provided a complete store-house of remedies to cure all ailments of mankind. The first generally accepted use of plants as healing agents was depicted in the cave paintings discovered in the Lascaux caves in France, which have been radio carbonated between 1300-2500 BC. Indigenous Healers learned by observing sick animals food preferences, their search for bitter herbs and either they consume or reject them.

Recent research has focused on natural plants product alternative for disease control in developing countries. The majority of rural dwellers do not have access to modern health care, so they mostly depend on medicinal plant to prevent or eliminate diseases. Medicinal plants are cheaper, more accessible to most of the population in the world. Thus, there is need to encourage the use of medicinal plants as potential sources of new drugs. There has therefore been an upsurge in the interest in herbal remedies in several parts of the world with many of the herbal remedial being incorporated into orthodox medical practice.

The history of plant being used for medicinal purpose is probably as old as history of mankind. Extraction and characterization of several active phytoconstituents from these green factories have given birth to some high activity profile drugs. Recent years have shown a growing popularity and faith in the use of herbal medicine worldwide. This is because of modern synthetic drugs have failed to provide a cure all guarantee to most of the human diseases and produces side effects, which at the end turnout to be more problematic than actual disease itself. The herbal medicine provide cocktail of phytocompounds, which are believed to act in synergistic manner.

A large proportion of Indian population even today depends on the Indian system of medicine – ‘Ayurveda -An ancient science of life’. Indians have been using herbs as early as 1900 BC. Several herbs and minerals used in Ayurveda were later described by ancient Indian herbalists such as Charaka and Sushruta during the 1st millennium BC. The Sushruta Samhita attributed to Sushruta in the 6th century BC describes 700 medicinal plants, 64 preparations from minerals and 57 preparations based on animal source.
Tamarindus indicia L., belongs to the Dicotyledonous family Leguminosae Sub Family Caesalpiniaceae, which is the third largest family of flowering plants with a total of 727 genera and 19,327 species.

The tamarind (Tamarindus indica L.) is a tree-type of plant which belongs to the Leguminosae, caesalpiniaceae family. It is indigenous to tropical Africa but has become naturalized in North and South America from Florida to Brazil, and is also cultivated in subtropical China, India, Pakistan, Indochina, Philippines, Java and Spain.

Tamarind seed is a by-product of the tamarind pulp industry. The presence of tannins and other dyeing matter in the testa make the whole seed unsuitable for direct consumption. However, the seeds become edible after soaking and boiling in water, which removes the seed coat. In the past and even today, seeds have been wasted. Even though they could be ground to make a palatable livestock feed.

Tamarind flowers and leaves can be eaten as vegetables and are prepared in a variety of dishes. The foliage has a high forage value, though tamarind is rarely harvested for this purpose because it affects fruit yields. Tamarind trees growing in woodlands are often eaten by wild animals, such as elephants or giraffes, for which tamarind is a preferred plant, perhaps because of its high crude protein content. In the southern states of India, cooked seeds of tamarind are occasionally fed to draught animals. Both leaves and bark are rich in tannins. Leaves yield a red dye, which is used to give a yellow tint to cloth previously dyed with indigo. Tamarind leaves are a fair source of vitamin C and β-carotene and the mineral content is high, particularly potassium, phosphorous, calcium and magnesium.