INTRODUCTION

Ancient civilization greatly depended on local flora and fauna for their survival and experimented with various berries, roots, leaves, minerals or animal parts to find out what effects they had and as a result, many crude drugs were observed by the local healer to have some medical use. As understanding of therapeutic benefits deepens and demands for natural products increased, previously serendipitous discoveries evolved into active searches for new medicines. At present 25 per cent of the modern medicines are developed from plants that were first used traditionally, and many synthetic drugs have also been obtained from natural precursors [Chaturvedi et al., 2009].

Peptic ulcer is a common ailment and its prevalence is 13% in adult population. It occurs due to an imbalance between the aggressive power of acid plus pepsin and defensive factors i.e. the ability of mucosa to resist this digestive power leading to ulcer formation. Ulcers occur only in the presence of acid and pepsin and are never found in achlorhydric patients and patients of pernicious anemia. On the other hand severe intractable ulceration always occur in Zollinger Ellison syndrome which is characterized by very high acid secretion. Synthetic drugs used for treatment of conditions associated with high gastric secretion have many adverse effects, for example Cimetidine has anti-androgenic activity and its prolong use in high doses causes gynaecomastia, hyperprolactinemia, loss of lipido and impotence. Similarly it also acts as an enzyme inhibitor, leading to decease in the metabolism of many drugs and produce their toxicity. Ranitidine and Nizatidine also cause gynaecomastia [Shamburek and Schubert 1992], Omeprazole produce carcinoid tumar. Antacid can cause systemic adverse effects and alkalosis. Synthetic calcium channel blockers are also considered to have some role in decreasing gastrointestinal motility and gastric acid secretions which help in reducing the intensity of pain which is experienced during peptic ulcer or hyperacid secretory states.

Calcium channel blockers are effectively used in other conditions like cardiovascular diseases e.g. angina, Myocardial infarction, hypertension, bronchial asthma and prevention of premature labour [Anwar Gilani, et al 2005]. Extract of medicinal plants containing natural calcium channel blockers, if proved effective for decreasing acid secretion, will be very much helpful in prevention and treatment of
peptic ulcer especially for those who have peptic ulcer associated with any of the above mentioned diseases. Thus monotherapy with natural calcium channel blocker will be beneficial. They will be safe, cost effective and will save a lot of national economy. Besides, they will enable a common man to get crude extract from these easily available local plants for the treatment of peptic ulcer, and other diseases associated with hyper gastric secretory condition [Jain et al., 1994].

The term diabetes mellitus describes a metabolic disorder, characterized by chronic hyperglycemia with disturbances of carbohydrate, fat and protein metabolism resulting from defective insulin metabolism. Diabetes complications are divided into micro-vascular (due to damage to small blood vessels) and macrovascular (due to damage to larger blood vessels). Microvascular complications include damage to eyes (retinopathy) leading to blindness, to kidneys (nephropathy) leading to renal failure and to nerves (neuropathy) leading to impotence and diabetic foot disorders. Macrovascular complications include cardiovascular diseases such as heart attacks, strokes and insufficiency in blood flow to legs.

Adverse effects of popular antiulcer and antidiabetic agents have lead rapid search for new antiulcer and antidiabetic agents. Because of the long history of plants in the treatment of different human ailments, most of the herbal drugs are believed to be safer than the synthetic drugs with no side effects; therefore medicinal plants have gained more importance as possible source of alternative and effective drugs. Plants and natural products remain as an untapped reservoir of potentially useful chemical compounds not only as drugs but also as unique templates that could serve as a starting point for synthetic analogues. Over 50% of all modern clinical drugs are of natural product origin and natural products play an important role in the drug development programmers in the pharmaceuticals industries [Grover et al, 2003]

The different parts of plants are commonly used to treat many disorders; moreover in antiquity the herbal drug was reputed to possess antidiabetic, antihypertensive, antiulcer, anticancer and many more pharmacological uses. The studies on extracts of plants support their traditional use. There is no doubt that many of the important drugs of plant origin are still occupying its place in the medical treatment. The ayurveda is pioneers in such fields. Their prescriptions are still used up till now. So the field of herbal medicine is very important for further studies and research.