INTRODUCTION

Living organisms are very important part of life on this earth which includes all plants and animals from micro-organisms up to huge plants and animals. Many animals like birds, reptiles, mammals and fishes are useful for food, skin, bones, teeth etc. But under certain circumstances, all living organisms are susceptible to diseases and fishes are no exception. A majority of fishes carry heavy infestation of Helminth parasites which cause deterioration in their food value and may result in heavy mortality. Besides, infected fishes act as a very potent source of helminth infection of man and they are transmitted to man only through eating of fish.

Fish is consumed for its nutritive value as it contains about 19% protein similar in amino acid composition to that found in muscles depending upon the species and the season of the year. It also contains essential vitamins, fats magnesium, phosphorous, iron and copper.

The physico-chemical parameters in aquatic environment where fish adjust itself to produce great stress on their limited homostatic mechanism resulting in upsetting the physiological control of fishes leading to imbalance of defence mechanism causing susceptibility to various diseases.

About 3000 million cases of Helminthiasis exist world wide in the year 2002 itself. The skin, where the flukes are attached shows area of scale loss and may ooze a pinkish serous fluid. Gill parasites results in respiratory diseases, gills may be swollen and pale, respiratory rate may be increased and fish will be less tolerant of low oxygen.

Thus, there arise a need to study helminth infection in fishes as it is consumed on a large scale and is concerned with health problems of man.

The present study is on Trematodes of freshwater fishes which parasitizes in the intestine, gill filaments eye-muscles, air-bladder, liver, gall-bladder, urinary bladder, beneath skin and fins of fishes. These trematodes are dorso-ventrally flattened flukes which are digenetic and monogenetic. Digenetic trematodes complete their life cycle on two different hosts while monogenetic trematodes completes their life cycle on one host only. Some has specific host but some change due to change in environmental conditions.