INTRODUCTION
Escherichia coli is normally present in the intestinal tract of man and animals. It sounds, therefore, paradoxical that the organism can cause diarrhoeal disease. Many institutional out-breaks of E. coli gastro-enteritis, particularly in new born babies, have been reported from various parts of the world. The aetiological role of E. coli in such out-breaks has often been proved beyond doubt. However, its role in sporadic cases of diarrhoea has not been clearly established. Conflicting evidences have also been obtained regarding the role of Escherichia coli in the causation of gastro-enteritis in older children and adults.

Numerous serotypes of E. coli have been associated with gastro-intestinal disease of man. The cause and effect relationship could be established only in a limited number of cases. The status of many other serotypes regarding their enteropathogenic potentiality has not been definitely established. No suitable laboratory test is at present available by which the enteropathogenic varieties of E. coli can be differentiated from the other members of the same species, which are similar in all other respect and yet lack the potentiality of causing gastro-enteritis.

In view of the above lacunae in our knowledge it seemed worth-while to probe into the problem of enteropathogenicity of Escherichia coli, particularly because very little is known about the situation in this geographical area.