INTRODUCTION

The taxonomy of Digenetic trematodes of marine fishes has been a neglected subject up to the first six decades of the present century. During this period, only a handful of research workers did some work on this branch of science. The prominent workers of marine fishes of this period were Srivastava (1933-1942), Chauhan (1943-1945) and to a certain extent Gupta N.K. (1956). Of these three authors, the work of Srivastava was outstanding. He published a series of papers on the taxonomy of Digenetic trematodes of some marine fishes from two areas of the Arabian Sea at Karachi and Bay of Bengal at Puri, but considering that the fish fauna of India is known to have more than one thousand five hundred species of marine fishes, the efforts of these three authors leaves a lot of lacuna in our knowledge about the digenetic trematodes of marine fishes which are yet to be examined. The Indian coast line is very vast, extending from the Bay of Bengal on the east to the Arabian sea on the west. The ecological conditions in such a vast coast line with varying climatic conditions supports the view that the fish fauna as well as other animal fauna vary from region to region.
In the last two or three decades some more authors like Hafeezullah (1970-1980), Madhavi (1972-1979), Gupta, V. and Ahmad (1974-1981) and Ahmad (1977-1989), have done considerable work on marine fishes. Hafeezullah has done work on the marine fishes of the west coast others have contributions from the east coast of India.

It is very clear that still a large area of Indian coast is open for further researches on the digenetic trematodes of marine fishes. It is rather impossible for a single worker to cover the entire coast but it does not mean that a beginning should not be made by the research workers only because the task is daunting. There are two handicaps, first is the financial aspect and the second one is the distance problem which come in the way for making survey of marine fishes of India. I did an extensive survey of marine fishes of Bay of Bengal at Digha and nearby coasts of West Bengal. The area selected was new for a variety of new digenetic trematodes. A large collection of new and known parasites have been made. The present thesis includes 20 new species of parasites. These parasites belong to 5 families, 9 subfamilies and 14 genera. Out of the fourteen two are new genera. The new forms have been thoroughly compared with existing related species. The thesis has been divided into the following chapters:-
1. Introduction
2. Materials and Technique
3. Host Parasite list
4. Historical review
5. Descriptions and discussions of parasites collected during the course of the work along with their taxonomical assessment of their taxonomic position
6. Summary
7. References.

The thesis also includes 20 photographic plates.