INTRODUCTION

Heterakis gallinarum (Schrank, 1788) Madsen, 1949, is a nematode parasite occurring in the caeca of domestic fowl. The parasite is widely distributed and estimates of its incidence in fowl population in our country usually indicate heavy infection. Besides, many domestic and game birds have also been found to harbour this parasite.

The parasite has been reported as the causal organism of 'Typhlitis' among poultry, which results in diarrhea, consequent loss of condition and death. Formation of nodules and other pathological changes in the caeca have been observed. Evidences are also available that heavy infection with the worm many pre-dispose the host with Leukemia virus. Its role as biological vector in the spread of fatal disease, 'Histomoniasis' among turkeys and fowls has developed considerable interest and opened a new field for scientific investigations.

Poultry farming happened to be a major industry in our country. Rearing of native fowls on non-commercial basis is widely practiced in many villages and towns. Poultry and poultry products sold, used or traded accounts a good part of
of the total income of the country. But the information on various biological characteristics of this worm has been found to be very scanty and incomplete. Obviously, the chances of survival for such a promising industry appears to be very dim. In view of the alarming situation a thorough study of the worm based on its morphology, biology and control has been undertaken. It is believed that the work will fill in the gap and stimulate interest to our knowledge of the poultry parasites and poultry diseases in India. Since, scientific poultry farming is becoming increasingly important, anything which is learned with regard to the eradication of this parasite is likely to have a world-wide application.