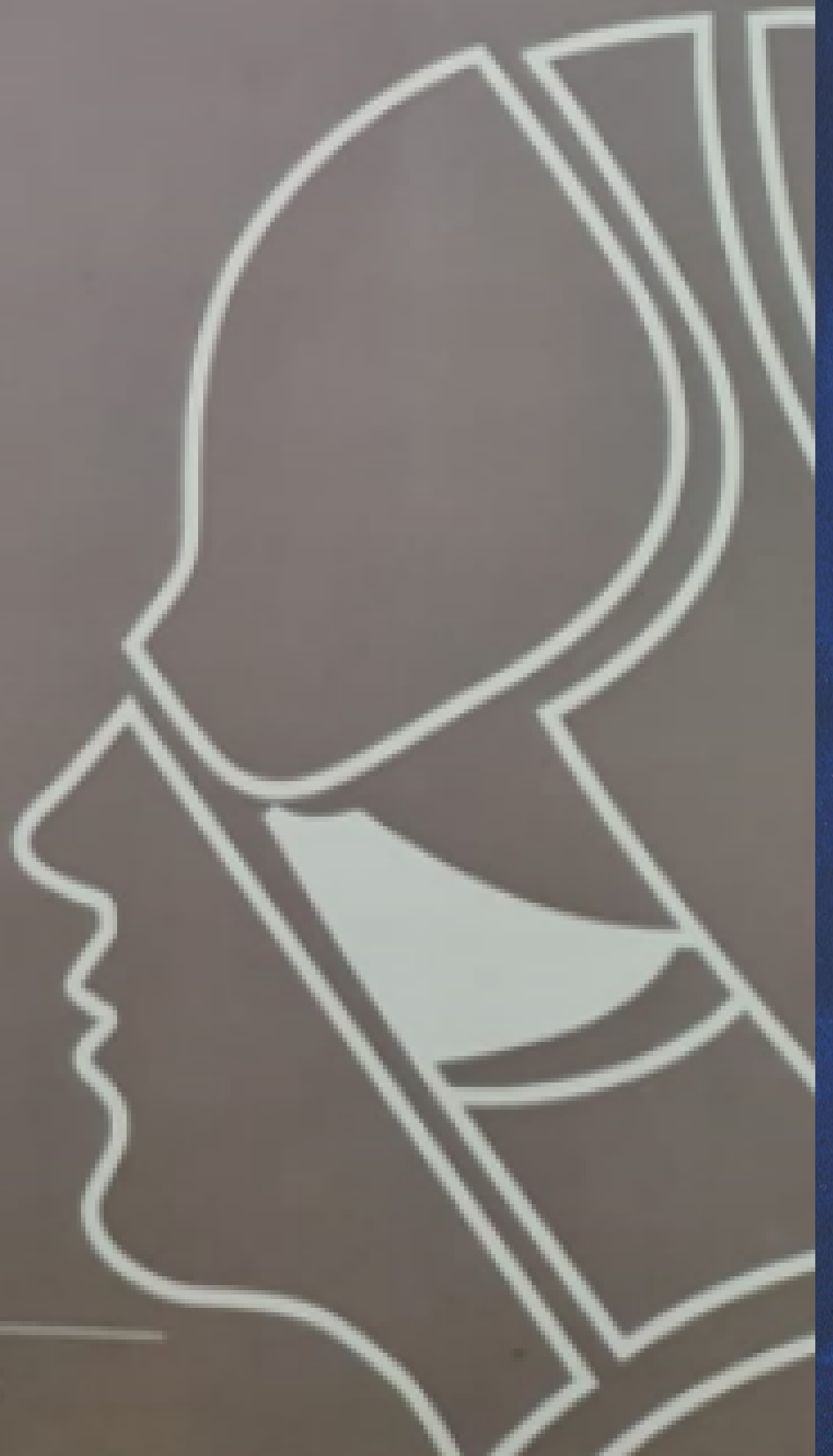


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41.

The evaluation of child morbidity in the marginalized fisher folks of Kerala, India

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Abstract:

This paper is to examine the extend of child morbidity in the background of poverty on the already marginalized community of fisher folks in Kerala, a part of South India. This will portray the potential impacts of poverty on the socio-economically weaker session. Kerala's social indicators of development such as death rate, birth rate, infant mortality rate, life expectancy, literacy rate and the like are comparable to that of the most advanced countries. The study addressed the Objectives, such as to evaluate the socio-economic conditions of fisher folk and their relations with the causes and extend of child morbidity and To enumerate the source of funds for financing health care. A community based cross sectional study was done among fishermen in coastal area of two, Panchayaths of Thrissur, Kerala, viz. Eriyad and Sreenarayanapuram. Fifty households in the two fishing panchayaths were selected by multistage cluster sampling method. This study is mainly based on a primary survey, conducted in two, Panchayaths of Thrissur, Kerala, viz. Eriyad and Sreenarayanapuram. The survey covered a total of 50 households (25 from each panchayath) by simple random basis. History related to their socio-demographic details, occupational characteristics, their personal habits were asked with the aid of the semi structured questionnaire and also their physical parameters were measured. The association between various factors and physical morbidity were analyzed by using various tests. The results of the study showed that the highest prevalence for physical morbidity in the children's of fishermen was seen for fever (40%) followed by Skin disorders (3%), heart diseases (2%). The study also found the presence of high illiteracy rate, lack of proper social security, long duration of fishing activity, lack of proper protection from sunlight and noise on board in the fishermen population. Age was significantly associated with most of the morbidity in the present study. The study concluded that the prevalence of non-communicable diseases in the children of fishermen population of Thrissur coast district was moderately high, highlighting the need for specific screening programmes and occupational health services for these population. Therefore, it is envisaged that, there is an urgent need to understand the common health related child morbidity of the fishermen population and to provide for the occupational health services to screen and diagnose the chronic diseases in the fishermen community at the earliest.

Key words: child morbidity, fishermen, health, prevalence, coastal population