

Poster

📅 Thu. Sep 25, 2025 2:00 PM - 3:00 PM JST | Thu. Sep 25, 2025 5:00 AM - 6:00 AM UTC 🏛️ Poster Session (Foyer 1)

Poster 2

[P-2-05] The Manas Samvaadha Project: Culturally-Contextualized Street Theatre for Mental Health Literacy and Stigma Reduction in Rural Adolescent Males

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Keywords : Mental Health Literacy, Community Intervention, Human Library, Stigma Reduction, Rural Health

Objectives: This pilot study investigated the efficacy of a culturally-contextualized street theatre intervention as a pre engagement strategy to enhance mental health literacy and reduce stigma among males in rural Karnataka, preceding "Human Library" sessions for the "Manas Samvaadha" project. The "Manas Samvaadha" project aims to address significant mental health disparities by utilizing Human Libraries as a grassroots-level communication tool in communities.

Methods: A single-group pre- and post-intervention design was employed. A street play was performed for a cohort of 128 male students enrolled at ITI College, Kantanakunte, Doddaballapura, as an Information, Education, and Communication (IEC) component of the "Manas Samvaadha" initiative. Participants completed pre- and post-intervention questionnaires to assess changes across multiple domains, including understanding of mental health issues, perception of superstitions affecting mental illness, cultural relevance of the content, relatability of characters, challenge to pre-existing beliefs, awareness of stigma, empathy towards individuals with mental illness, confidence in discussing mental health, and perceived efficacy of the street play format. Qualitative feedback was concurrently collected to elucidate impactful elements and inform future refinements.

Results: Post-intervention data revealed significant positive shifts in participant attitudes and knowledge. A substantial majority (79.5%) of participants reported improved understanding of mental health issues (50.4% Strongly Agree, 29.1% Agree). The play effectively highlighted the impact of superstitions on mental illness (82.8% combined Strongly Agree/Agree). Over 82% perceived the content as culturally relevant and relatable. Furthermore, 78.4% indicated that the play challenged previous beliefs about mental illness (53.6% Agree, 24.8% Strongly Agree), and 82.3% demonstrated increased awareness of stigma and discrimination (47.6% Agree, 34.7% Strongly Agree). Empathy towards individuals with mental illness increased in 84.1% of respondents (49.2% Agree, 34.9% Strongly Agree). Participants also reported enhanced confidence in discussing mental health (72.3% combined Strongly Agree/Agree). Qualitatively, the "Swamiji" character and character transitions were frequently cited as impactful.

Conclusions: Culturally-contextualized street theatre serves as a highly effective and impactful preparatory intervention for mental health awareness and stigma reduction, particularly among adolescent males in rural settings. The observed improvements in mental

health literacy, empathy, and willingness to discuss mental health underscore its utility as a foundational component for community-based initiatives like the Human Library model. Findings suggest continued integration with strategic refinements for audience engagement and voice projection.