

INTERNATIONAL DAY OF YOGA 2026 – VILLAGE OUTREACH PROGRAMME: YOGA FOR HEALTHY AGING

Organised by: Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University, Baripada, Odisha

Date: 21 June 2026

Time: 6:00 A.M.

Venue: Sankhabhanga Village, Sankhabhanga Gram Panchayat, Baripada Block, Mayurbhanj, Odisha

Theme: *Yoga for Healthy Aging*

Introduction

In consonance with the nationwide observance of the **International Day of Yoga (IDY) 2026**, the **Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE), Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University (MSCBU), Baripada**, organised a comprehensive **Village Outreach Programme** on **21 June 2026** at **Sankhabhanga Village under Sankhabhanga Gram Panchayat, Baripada Block, Mayurbhanj, Odisha**. The programme commenced at **6:00 A.M.** and formed a significant component of the University's extension and community outreach initiatives aimed at promoting holistic health, preventive healthcare, and sustainable community well-being.

The programme was organised in accordance with the **official theme of the International Day of Yoga 2026, "Yoga for Healthy Aging,"** announced by the **Ministry of Ayush, Government of India**. The theme highlighted the importance of yoga as a lifelong practice for maintaining physical vitality, mental resilience, emotional stability, and overall quality of life, particularly in the context of an ageing population. Through this outreach initiative, the University sought to extend the benefits of yoga beyond the campus by engaging directly with rural communities and encouraging the adoption of healthy lifestyle practices.

The Village Outreach Programme reflected the University's commitment to integrating academic excellence with community service and demonstrated the pivotal role of higher educational institutions in promoting public health awareness, social responsibility, and inclusive community development.

Objectives

The programme was organised with the following objectives:

- To commemorate the International Day of Yoga 2026 through meaningful community participation.
- To promote the practice of yoga as a preventive healthcare measure among rural communities.
- To create awareness regarding the importance of healthy ageing through regular yoga practice.
- To educate participants on the Common Yoga Protocol (CYP) and its scientific and therapeutic benefits.

- To strengthen the University's extension activities by engaging directly with local communities.
- To encourage intergenerational participation in yoga for enhancing physical, mental, and emotional well-being.
- To foster collaboration between the University and local self-governing institutions in promoting community health and wellness.

Inaugural Session

The programme began in the early hours of the morning with the registration of participants and the distribution of **official International Day of Yoga commemorative T-shirts** to all attendees. The uniform distribution promoted a sense of unity, discipline, and collective participation while symbolising the University's inclusive approach to community engagement.

The outreach programme witnessed the enthusiastic participation of nearly **80 villagers**, representing diverse sections of the community. Participants included **senior citizens, women, school children, youth, farmers, Self-Help Group (SHG) members, local volunteers, and community leaders**, making the programme a truly intergenerational and inclusive public health initiative.

The programme was honoured by the presence of several representatives of the local self-government institutions, including:

- **Mr. Balabhadra Hembram**, Sarpanch Representative, Sankhabhanga Gram Panchayat
- **Mr. Punta Soren**, Ward Member
- **Mr. Ananta Kishore**, Panchayat Executive Coordinator
- Other Ward Members and Panchayat representatives of Sankhabhanga Gram Panchayat

Their presence reflected the strong partnership between the University and local governance institutions in promoting community welfare and grassroots development.

University Delegation

The programme was led by a distinguished team of faculty members from the Centre for Distance and Online Education.

The University delegation was headed by **Prof. Sukanta Kumar Nayak, Director, Centre for Distance and Online Education**, who provided overall leadership and guidance for the outreach programme.

The overall coordination and field management of the programme were efficiently undertaken by **Dr. Sujoy Kundu, Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work, Centre for Distance and Online Education**, who supervised participant mobilisation, programme execution, logistical arrangements, and community coordination.

The yoga demonstration session was conducted by the faculty members of the **Department of Yoga and Naturopathy, Centre for Distance and Online Education**.

The practical session commenced with the chanting of a traditional Sanskrit invocation led by **Dr. Sujata Panda, Assistant Professor, Department of Yoga and Naturopathy**, creating a calm, spiritually enriching, and focused atmosphere for the yoga practice.

Subsequently, **Dr. Himanshu Parida, Assistant Professor, Department of Yoga and Naturopathy**, demonstrated the various components of the **Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)**. The demonstrations included preparatory stretching exercises, standing and sitting asanas, balancing postures, breathing techniques (Pranayama), meditation, and guided relaxation practices. Throughout the session, participants were instructed regarding the correct posture, breathing patterns, safety precautions, and therapeutic significance of each yogic practice, ensuring that individuals from different age groups could participate safely and effectively.

Address by the Director

Addressing the gathering, **Prof. Sukanta Kumar Nayak**, Director, Centre for Distance and Online Education, highlighted the significance of the International Day of Yoga as a global movement promoting physical health, mental well-being, emotional balance, and social harmony.

Referring to the theme "**Yoga for Healthy Aging**," he explained that yoga is a holistic system of health that enables individuals to maintain flexibility, muscular strength, balance, respiratory efficiency, emotional stability, and mental resilience throughout different stages of life. He emphasised that regular yoga practice plays a vital role in preventing lifestyle-related disorders such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, stress-related illnesses, anxiety, depression, musculoskeletal disorders, and cardiovascular diseases.

Prof. Nayak further reiterated the University's commitment to extending quality educational and health awareness programmes to rural communities. He observed that universities have a broader social responsibility that extends beyond formal education and includes empowering communities through awareness, capacity building, and sustainable outreach initiatives. He encouraged villagers to integrate yoga into their daily lives as a simple, cost-effective, and scientifically validated means of improving overall quality of life.

Common Yoga Protocol Session

The practical yoga session formed the central component of the outreach programme.

Under the expert guidance of **Dr. Sujata Panda** and **Dr. Himanshu Parida**, participants practised the **Common Yoga Protocol (CYP)** prescribed for the International Day of Yoga celebrations.

The session included:

- Preparatory loosening exercises
- Standing yoga postures
- Sitting yoga postures
- Prone and supine asanas
- Breathing exercises (Pranayama)
- Meditation techniques

- Guided relaxation practices

Each posture was explained in detail, including its physical, physiological, and psychological benefits. Participants were encouraged to perform the practices according to their age, flexibility, and physical condition. Special attention was given to senior citizens to ensure safe participation while demonstrating modifications wherever necessary.

The instructors also explained how regular yoga practice enhances flexibility, improves posture, strengthens muscles and joints, increases respiratory efficiency, promotes cardiovascular health, reduces stress, improves concentration, enhances emotional resilience, and contributes significantly to healthy ageing.

Community Participation and Awareness

One of the major strengths of the programme was the enthusiastic participation of the local community.

Senior citizens actively participated in the yoga session, appreciating its relevance in maintaining mobility and independence during old age. Women and members of various Self-Help Groups demonstrated remarkable enthusiasm in learning different yogic practices and expressed interest in continuing regular yoga sessions within their villages.

Children and youth participated actively throughout the programme, displaying keen interest in understanding the scientific basis of yoga and its importance in maintaining physical fitness and mental discipline.

Faculty members interacted extensively with the villagers after the practical session, addressing their queries regarding yoga practices, healthy lifestyle habits, stress management, nutrition, physical activity, and preventive healthcare. These interactions created an environment of mutual learning and strengthened the relationship between the University and the rural community.

Faculty Support and Volunteer Participation

The successful organisation of the programme was made possible through the dedicated support of an interdisciplinary team of faculty volunteers from Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University.

The volunteer team included:

- **Dr. Debabrata Panda**, Department of Sanskrit
- **Dr. Dhananjay Nayak**, Department of Political Science
- **Mr. Satyanarayana Mandal**, Department of Political Science
- **Mr. Biswajit Das**, Department of Commerce
- **Ms. Anjana Mohanty**, Department of History

The faculty members actively assisted in participant registration, community mobilisation, programme coordination, logistical management, participant guidance, and awareness

generation throughout the outreach programme. Their collective efforts ensured the smooth, disciplined, and successful conduct of the event.

Outcomes and Impact

The Village Outreach Programme generated significant educational, social, and health-related outcomes.

The programme successfully:

- Promoted awareness regarding the importance of yoga for healthy ageing and preventive healthcare.
- Encouraged regular practice of the Common Yoga Protocol among rural communities.
- Enhanced awareness regarding lifestyle modification for preventing non-communicable diseases.
- Fostered intergenerational participation by involving children, youth, adults, and senior citizens in a common wellness initiative.
- Strengthened collaboration between Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University and local self-governing institutions.
- Reinforced the University's commitment to community engagement, rural outreach, and public health promotion.
- Encouraged participants to adopt yoga as a daily practice for improving physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

The interactive feedback session held at the conclusion of the programme revealed overwhelming appreciation from the villagers, who expressed gratitude towards the University for organising a health-focused initiative within their community. Many participants conveyed their willingness to continue practising yoga regularly and requested similar awareness programmes in the future.

Conclusion

The **International Day of Yoga 2026 – Village Outreach Programme** organised by the **Centre for Distance and Online Education, Maharaja Sriram Chandra Bhanja Deo University**, was a highly successful extension activity that effectively translated the University's vision of academic excellence into meaningful community service.

By taking the International Day of Yoga celebrations beyond the University campus and into a rural community, the Centre demonstrated its commitment to promoting inclusive education, preventive healthcare, and sustainable community development. The active participation of local residents, Panchayat representatives, faculty members, and University volunteers transformed the programme into a vibrant platform for public health awareness and social engagement.

The initiative not only celebrated the timeless values of yoga but also reinforced the University's dedication to empowering rural communities through education, awareness, and outreach. Through such programmes, the Centre for Distance and Online Education continues to strengthen its role as a socially responsive institution committed to fostering healthier, more

informed, and resilient communities in accordance with the vision of the National Education Policy and the Ministry of Ayush.

