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“Digital health and assistive technologies will play a significant role in future research”

02 March 2026 | Views | By Dr Manbeena Chawla

During the Union Budget 2026-27 announcement, Finance Minister has announced a slew of measures aimed at building a new range of employable and career-important skilling activities for youth in a variety of sectors, including public health services. For Allied Health Care Professionals, existing institutions will be upgraded and new programmes will be set up in the private and government sectors, along with establishment of new institutions. In light of this new development, BioSpectrum took the opportunity to speak with Dr Jaga, Professor, Mohan Babu University (MBU) – Tirupati about how the university is redefining paramedical and allied healthcare education in the country.

How does MBU plan to position the School of Paramedical & Allied Healthcare Sciences as a centre of excellence in healthcare education and applied research by 2026?

Mohan Babu University plans to position the School of Paramedical Allied and Healthcare Sciences as a centre of excellence by 2026 through a balanced focus on academic depth, applied research, clinical exposure, and pubic health impact. The

school emphasizes outcome-based education aligned with national and global competency frameworks, ensuring graduates demonstrates strong clinical reasoning, ethical practice, and professional skills. Choice based and fully flexible curriculum design at MBU integrates hands-on training, experiential learning, and early clinical exposure through reputed hospital collaborations.

Applied research is a core pillar, with encouragement for faculty-student collaborative projects addressing real-world healthcare problems such as rehabilitation outcomes, diagnostics efficiency, and community health needs. The University's research ecosystem supports interdisciplinary grants, ethical research practices, and publication in peer-reviewed journals. Modern laboratories, digital learning platforms, and skill development centres strengthen experiential learning.

Continuing professional development initiatives at MBU are designed to promote the culture of innovation while bridging the gap between education and healthcare practice. Community outreach programmes and health camps at the surrounding rural areas, and public service initiatives further reinforce social accountability. Collectively, these efforts enable MBU to emerge as a recognised hub for high-quality allied and healthcare education, translational research, and workforce development by 2026.

How is the School strengthening entrepreneurship, and diverse career pathways for graduates across India and global healthcare markets?

The School of Paramedical Allied and Healthcare Sciences at MBU actively strengthens entrepreneurship and multiple career pathways by growing innovation-driven education and industry readiness. Students are encouraged to explore roles beyond conventional clinical employment, including healthcare entrepreneurship, research, health informatics, rehabilitation technology, diagnostics services, and public health initiatives.

Entrepreneurial thinking is embedded through innovation clubs, startup awareness programs, and incubation support that help students transform ideas into viable healthcare solutions. Exposure to real-world challenges through internships, fieldwork, and industry interactions prepares graduates for leadership roles in hospitals, wellness centres, rehabilitation clinics, diagnostic laboratories, NGOs, and healthcare startups.

The school also supports global career mobility through MBU's International Cell by emphasizing professional competencies, communication skills, ethical standards, and digital literacy aligned with international healthcare practices. Faculty mentorship, alumni engagement, and career guidance initiatives assist students in identifying pathways in research, higher education, clinical specialization, and emerging healthcare domains.

Regular industrial visits specifically for students in Optometry, Radiology and Imaging Technology, Dialysis Technology, Medical Laboratory Technology, and Physiotherapy programs enhance their understanding about entrepreneurial opportunities in the healthcare sector. The entrepreneurship education at MBU ensures that graduates are adaptable, strong, and prepared for evolving healthcare markets across India and internationally.

How does the School align itself with national healthcare priorities and India's broader vision for healthcare development by 2026?

MBU aligns the School of Paramedical Allied and Healthcare Sciences closely with national healthcare priorities and India's broader vision for inclusive, accessible, and quality healthcare by 2026. The curriculum adopted from National Commission for Allied and Health Care Professions, Government of India is designed to address workforce gaps in preventive care, diagnostics, rehabilitation, emergency services, and community health areas critical to national health missions.

The school emphasises ethical practice, patient centred care, and evidence-based interventions, supporting national goals such as strengthening primary healthcare, improving rehabilitation services, and enhancing healthcare delivery in underserved populations. Community-oriented programmes, rural health exposure, and outreach initiatives cultivate social responsibility and public health awareness among students.

Research activities focus on locally relevant health challenges, including non-communicable diseases, neurological rehabilitation, maternal and child health, geriatric care, and functional recovery, contributing to data-driven healthcare improvements.

Through integration of education, service, and research, MBU contributes to national healthcare development while preparing

professionals who are competent, compassionate, and aligned with India’s long-term healthcare vision.

How important is interdisciplinary collaboration between healthcare, engineering, technology and data sciences at MBU, and how does it enhance allied healthcare education?

Interdisciplinary collaboration is central to allied and healthcare education at Mohan Babu University, recognising that modern healthcare challenges require integrated solutions. Collaboration between healthcare sciences, engineering, technology, and data sciences enhances learning by exposing students to innovative tools, analytical thinking, and system-based healthcare approaches.

At MBU, interdisciplinary projects encourage allied health and physiotherapy students to work along with peers from engineering and computing disciplines on solutions such as assistive devices, rehabilitation technologies, health monitoring systems, and digital healthcare applications. Such collaboration enriches clinical knowledge with technological innovation, enabling students to understand how digital tools, simulation technologies, and emerging healthcare technologies can improve patient assessment, treatment planning, and outcomes. Faculty-led interdisciplinary research further strengthens applied learning, encourages problem-solving, and fosters a culture of innovation among students.

Allied health and physiotherapy students actively participating and presenting their research work in technology, AI and data sciences related conferences organised by MBU further enhances their collaboration opportunities. This approach strengthens problem-solving skills, creativity, and adaptability supported by technology in health care.

By embedding interdisciplinary exposure to allied and healthcare education, MBU prepares graduates to function effectively in multidisciplinary healthcare teams, communicate across domains, and contribute meaningfully to integrated healthcare delivery systems.

How is MBU preparing students to work with emerging healthcare technologies responsibly, ethically, and effectively?

MBU prepares students to work with emerging healthcare technologies responsibly, ethically, and effectively through structured academic training, practical exposure, and value-based education. Students are introduced to advancements such as digital diagnostics, telehealth, rehabilitation technologies, data-driven decision-making, and assistive devices within a strong ethical framework.

The school emphasises responsible technology use, patient safety, data confidentiality, and professional accountability. Ethical discussions, case-based learning, and research ethics training ensure students understand the implications of technology-driven healthcare. Simulation labs and technology-enabled teaching methods help students develop competence without compromising patient welfare.

Faculty mentorship and research engagement guide students in critically evaluating new technologies rather than adopting them blindly. Interdisciplinary exposure enhances understanding of how technology complements clinical judgment. Workshops, seminars, and conferences further expose students to innovations while reinforcing ethical healthcare practices.

Through this balanced approach, MBU ensures graduates are technologically proficient, ethically grounded, and capable of applying innovations effectively in real-world healthcare settings.

What research themes and focus areas will define allied healthcare sciences over the next few years?

Over the next few years, allied and healthcare sciences will be defined by research themes focused on clinical effectiveness, technology integration, and patient-centred outcomes for the elderly population since the aged population is increasing in India. At MBU, priority areas include diagnostics accuracy, functional assessment, neurological and musculoskeletal recovery, maternal and child care, geriatric care including diabetes & cancer, and evidence-based therapeutic interventions.

Tele health and remote rehabilitation through digital health, assistive technologies and outcome measurement tools will play a significant role in future research, enabling objective assessment and personalised care. Public health research addressing community needs, preventive strategies, and quality-of-life improvement will remain essential.

Interdisciplinary research integrating healthcare with engineering will drive innovation in wearable devices, rehabilitation robotics, and tele-rehabilitation models. Ethical research practices, translational outcomes, and real-world applicability will guide all scholarly activities.

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