



Report on the Special Lecture
on
Career Planning and Emerging Opportunities in Social Work Practice
Organized By
Department of Social Work
Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE)
Rabindra Bharati University,
Date of Program: July 21, 2025



DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK
RABINDRA BHARATI UNIVERSITY
CENTRE FOR DISTANCE AND ONLINE EDUCATION

**One Day International Seminar on Career Planning
and Emerging Opportunities in Social Work Practice**



EMINENT SPEAKER

DR. TAPATI DUTTA
FORT LEWIS COLLEGE, USA

CONVENORS:
DR. ARUNIMA DHAR
DR. INDRANIL SARKAR

DATE: 21ST JULY, 2025 TIME: 2:00 PM
VENUE: SEMINAR ROOM (ROOM NO. 604, 6TH FLOOR), RBU - CDOE

The Centre for Distance and Online Education (CDOE) at Rabindra Bharati University hosted a special guest lecture titled “Career Planning and Emerging Opportunities in Social Work Practice” on 21 July 2025. The session drew about 50 students and about 16 faculty members, all eager to explore innovative career pathways in social work.

The lecture was crucial for equipping social work students and practitioners with innovative teaching methods, global field experiences, and community-driven research tools that expand their career pathways and deepen their impact. Under the aegis of the MSW curriculum, it aimed to bridge academic theory with cutting-edge practice models.

The special lecture began with a warm welcome from Dr. Arunima Dhar, Assistant Professor in Social Work at RBU CDOE, who introduced the theme and underscored its importance for students and practitioners alike. Dr. Ruma Mitra then took the podium to officially felicitate our esteemed speaker, Dr. Tapati Dutta, Dr. Dhar then shared a brief overview of Dr. Dutta's achievements before inviting her to lead the session.



Felicitation of Dr Tapati Dutta

Speaker Profile: Dr. Tapati Dutta

Dr. Tapati Dutta currently serves as Chair and Associate Professor of Public Health at Fort Lewis College (FLC), a Native American Serving Non-Tribal Institution. Over the past two decades, her career has spanned program management, socio-behavioural research, health education, and policy advocacy across South Asia and Sub-Saharan Africa.

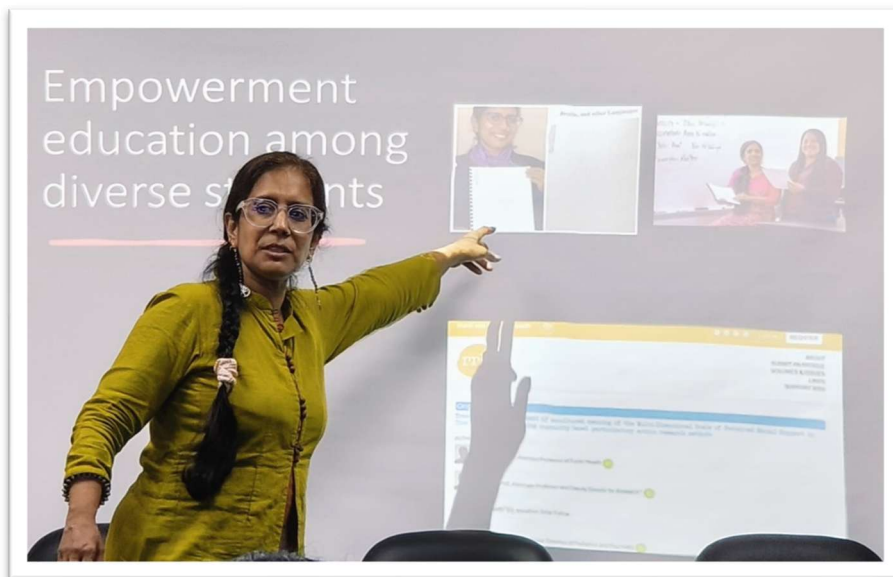
Her signature contributions include:

- i. Introducing storytelling pedagogic methods for deeper learner engagement.
- ii. Designing virtual global health internships that connect students with communities abroad.
- iii. Advancing academia-practice collaborative research through community-based participatory methods.

Dr. Dutta's academic credentials comprise:

- i. Doctoral degree in Public Health, Indiana University School of Public Health, Bloomington.
- ii. Three master's degrees in Population Studies, Human Resource Management, and Social Work.
- iii. Certifications in AI and Healthcare, Participatory Research, Health Education, and Digital Storytelling.

Her awards include IUSPH's Mohammad Torabi Early Career Award (2023), FLC's Featured Scholar Award (2023), the American Public Health Association's Vision Award (2021), the NUFFIC scholarship (2014), and the Indian Government's Education Ministry scholarship (1998).



Dr Tapati Dutta Delivering Lecture on Career Planning and Contemporary Challenges in Social Work Practice

Lecture Synopsis

In her lecture, Dr. Dutta showcased storytelling pedagogies, virtual global health internships, and community-based participatory research approaches, each illustrated through vivid case studies from South Asia, Sub-Saharan Africa, and Indigenous communities. Participants explored how narrative frameworks humanize data, how remote placements broaden field experience without prohibitive costs, and how co-designed research empowers local voices. Offering these interactive, practice-oriented sessions is essential for expanding global competencies, dismantling barriers to fieldwork, and strengthening research skills grounded in real-world collaboration.

Key Insights and Takeaways

Building on Dr. Dutta's insights, programmes should leverage storytelling to humanize practice and policy discussions, integrate virtual internships early in the curriculum to expand students' global competencies, build research partnerships that position community members as co-investigators, develop AI-supported tools for needs assessments and program monitoring, and cultivate interdisciplinary networks spanning public health, social work, and technology to enrich practice.

Participant Engagement

Dr. Dutta structured the session to maximize interaction by organizing breakout reflections in which small teams analysed case vignettes through storytelling prompts and by hosting a fifteen-minute Q&A panel that invited open dialogue on topics from grant writing to ethical dilemmas; feedback indicated that these hands-on exercises not only reinforced theoretical concepts but also sparked ideas for independent projects.

On behalf of the students, Mr Arpit Ranjan Panda appreciated the lecture's engaging blend of storytelling, interactive exercises, and real-world internship models as both inspiring and directly applicable to their future social work practice.



Student of MSW 4th Semester Giving Feedback of the Lecture Delivered by Dr Tapati Dutta

After the lecture, 48 attendees filled out a quick survey: 92% said the session was very useful, 87% plan to try storytelling in their classes, and 80% are interested in faculty-led virtual internships. Faculty also agreed that the talk clearly showed how to build careers in universities, non-profits, and policy work.



Group Photograph of students, faculties and guest speaker

Dr. Tapati Dutta's lecture catalysed fresh thinking on merging pedagogic innovation, global exposure, and community partnership in social work practice. Her insights equip RBU CDOE learners and educators to chart dynamic career paths rooted in empathy, collaboration, and impactful research.

Both Dr. Indranil Sarkar and Dr. Arunima Dhar played crucial roles in organizing the programme, which concluded with a vote of thanks by Dr. Dhar and a group photo session.