



## Child Rights Governance: Perspective from Below

**Biplaw Kumar Singh**

Azim Premji University

### **Abstract**

The experiences of three Child Care Institutions (CCIs) functioning in the programmatic setup of the Integrated Child Protection Scheme (ICPS) in India complicate and contextualizes some of the macro-social characterizations of child protection as enshrined in the United Nation Convention on Rights of Children (UNCRC). Following the anthropological approach to governance, this study captured the everyday practices and perceptions of actors and agencies involved in the running of three CCIs. In doing so it problematizes the discursive binary of universal and localized ideas of childhood and child protection. Although the three CCIs examined here are rooted in the same schematic (ICPS), temporal, and spatial (Karnataka) setting, surprisingly they interpret, understand, and materialize very different conceptualizations of child protection in their daily practices. These variances not merely reflect the turbulent ways in which the universal idea of child protection is being translated, contested, and indigenized in unique ways but also exhibit the ‘multiple identities of local’ competing, collaborating, and strategizing to construct a heterogeneous understanding of child rights. The heterogeneity of child rights provides fertile epistemic terrain to reframe child rights governance as a collective claim-making exercise that runs against the neoliberal appropriation of child rights governance hinged upon the idea of privatized child rights.

**Key Words:** Child protection, Child rights, child rights governance, UNCRC, Neoliberalism.