

## Personal Perception of Adults Among At-Risk Adolescents in Child Care Institutions in India

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### ABSTRACT

The perception about adults shapes the socialisation and rehabilitation processes of institutionalised at-risk adolescents. This study attempts to analyse the interaction between the understanding about rights and their outlook towards the society among adolescents at-risk from Child Care Institutions (CCI) in India (also known as Children in Need of Care and Protection, CNCP). Qualitative case study methodology along with personal construct theory was used to understand the construction and categorisation of adults as friendly and authoritative in two different contexts—prior to institutionalisation and description of staff in Child Care Institutions. Seven institutionalised adolescents were interviewed from two different Children homes. Discourse analysis revealed adolescents' emphasis on a phenomenon where there is a constant positioning and repositioning of adults as decision-makers. It was found that there is a constant comparison of the adults within the CCI and prior to life in CCI. During the passage of time in CCI, the children traverse unpleasant experiences with adults in the past and the positive interactions with the adults in the present. Further, these adolescents also form perceptions of right and wrong, through their interactions with the adults.

**Keywords:** adolescents' perception, children in need of care and protection (CNCP), opinions on adults, personal construct theory, positioning, qualitative case study