

## ABSTRACT

### **ROLE OF THE CHURCH IN REACHING NEXT GENERATION: ENVISIONING BANGALORE CHURCHES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF CHILDREN MINISTRY IN NORTH INDIA - TO MAXIMIZE THEIR SUPPORT**

by

Johnvesly Pethudu Muniappa

The purpose of this study was to explore why the churches in Bangalore only minimally support children's ministry in remote areas of North India and how to create a new vision for these churches for the significance of reaching children.

This study on children ministry was done because children matter to Jesus. They are the great mission field and a major growth engine for the future church. Moreover, children's ministry impacts the entire life of children and enables the church to reach their families with the Gospel.

The study was conducted among eight evangelical churches and two mission organizations in the eastern part of Bangalore. This eastern region has been among the fastest church growing areas of the Bangalore city. Therefore, if the perceptions are accurate regarding support to children's ministry, the consequences could be great.

To approximate the parameters of the "grand" experiment, the sampling population was comprised of male and female participants who are pastors and elders of the church. The study demonstrated the reasons for minimal support and contains suggestions for maximizing support of the children's ministry in north India. The aim of

the interviews was to compare and contrast the attitudes, perceptions, and support of the participants regarding children's ministry.

The findings of the study indicate that cultural attitudes and practices create obstacles for churches that financially support children's ministry. However, people were open to the idea of training both in the importance of children in God's Kingdom and in fundraising.

DISSERTATION APPROVAL

This is to certify that the dissertation entitled

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ENVISIONING BANGALORE CHURCHES ON THE SIGNIFICANCE OF  
CHILDREN MINISTRY IN NORTH INDIA - TO MAXIMIZE THEIR SUPPORT**

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Asbury Theological Seminary

In Partial Fulfillment  
Of the Requirements for the Degree  
Doctor of Ministry

by

Johnvesly Pethudu Muniappa

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **NATURE OF THE PROJECT**

#### **Overview of the Chapter**

This chapter sets out the reasons for the project through an autobiographical introduction and purpose statement that elaborates the problem and explores rationale for the project. Moreover, definitions of key terms are provided, and delimitations are described as this project cannot cover the whole of children ministry. In addition, Chapter One explains the research methodology, sampling, and the strategy to achieve the study's purpose. Finally, this chapter ends with the project overview.

#### **Autobiographical Introduction**

On a particular day, in the noon time, my wife, Esther Regina, and I had been to an evangelical church in Bangalore which is well-established, has a good financial background, and is theologically strong with biblical doctrines. We went to meet the senior Pastor and request that he support the children's ministry of Navjeevan Seva Mandal that is carried out in North India for the poor and needy. To our surprise we waited for four hours; at last he met us and told us that he will call us back. However, that call never came till this day. This incident made me passionate to explain to pastors the need to support and the importance of this children's ministry that is concealed in the remote areas of North India.

Likewise, I faced this challenge repeatedly from most of the Pastors and Churches in spite of their strong establishment and of financial support available in the church. They do not share the burden of reaching children, for they forgot the Tamil proverb that "if not now the opportunity will fade away."

Three decades back, missionaries from Friends Missionaries Prayer Band<sup>1</sup> came to our village and shared the gospel with deep concern and love of Christ with prayers. It was then that I got healed from the disease, and my aunt and mothers were delivered from the evil spirit. Then, my parents accepted Christ and took baptism, and the Missionary named me John Wesley. As there was not a good school in my village or surroundings, by God's grace, the missionaries helped me to get admission to a Catholic Mission School in a nearby town, as my parents were ministering as missionaries in another mission field. I studied with the help of my paternal grandparents. Later, the Navjeevan Seva Mandal started a children's home, and I got admitted for my middle school education.

The heartbreaking incident is that as I studied in Navjeevan Children Home, I felt homesick and discontented in my personal life. Therefore, I left the boarding school without informing those in-charge or my parents and walked towards Bangalore City which is 65 km away with prayers and tears in my eyes. But, God in His mercy saved me and brought me back home to my native place surprisingly without any harm on the next day itself. Yes, the Lord loves children, and the prayers that I learned from the children's home were very protective and a blessing. This second incident also encouraged me to reach children with the Gospel and to give hope in their life, for God loves them. Today I am glad to witness for the glory of God that my generation is reached. I am in the second in line in leadership of the organization, and if God is willing, I will be the future leader

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<sup>1</sup>Friends Missionary Prayer Band: is the largest mission indigenous organization in the Asian continent. Its core values are: Bible, Prayer and Faith centered, Prayer as the prime force, Interdenominational and trans-denominational in church relationship, Faith in the triune God, Call, commitment and simple lifestyle are emphasized (Friends Focus, October 2015 issue)

of our organization, Navjeevan Seva Mandal<sup>2</sup>. The missionaries did not know who I was, but they loved me and provided all I needed to study and grow in the Lord. This enabled me to be what I am today: the second in line leader of the mission organization. More importantly today myself, my family, and my generation are standing for Christ. Moreover, this will be the same witness of all the students who study in Navjeevan Seva Mandal homes and in Child Development Centers, as they are reached and nurtured from their childhood. Today they are standing for the Lord as a witnessing family and as leaders in their society, community, and churches.

Third, the locale of study is Bangalore, the capital of Karnataka State, India. It is a relatively more urbanized city and has the presence of hundreds of public and private sector industrial establishments. The inflow of Christians to the city is increasing, and the church is becoming richer and richer, but this influx of support is not adequate or satisfactory, especially to the children's ministry. Hence, I felt the need for increasing awareness of supporting the children's ministry by envisioning the pastors and churches to the maximum. This study is a small attempt to fill the gap of information in this particular aspect of ministering to the children.

Further, the words of Neil Postman shook the researcher to the extent that "Children are the living message we send to a time and we will not see again."<sup>3</sup> It is true that the opportunity provided will not return again. In India children are the largest group to be reached for Christ and the future of tomorrow's church. With a conducive and enabling environment, they would also become the resource for mission, and God can accomplish His mission through them. These are all the personal reasons which

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<sup>2</sup> NSM is the social wing of FMPB serving among the children in the mission fields of FMPB. Hereafter the researcher will use abbreviation NSM for Navjeevan Seva Mandal.

<sup>3</sup> Postman, Neil. *The Disappearance of Childhood*: Delacorte Press, New York, 1982. p9



motivated the researcher to explore the call to minister to children and educate pastors on the enormous responsibility of reaching children in our lifetime.

When my father accepted Christ, he was doing agricultural work and raising five children in my home was a difficult task for him. He put me in the Navjeevan Children Home along with my siblings. This was started for the new converts by the missionaries. But today, through Navjeevan Seva Mandal Children Home, I have more opportunities to grow and nurture others in spiritual lives than I ever dreamed possible. It has established an incredible hope for my future and provided healthier living accommodations while offering a quality education. Without a ministry like this and child sponsorship, I would have been left without my basic necessities met and in reality left out. But instead, God in His grace has given me hope and the presence of the children's home changed everything!

### **Statement of the Problem**

Even today, poverty in India has tainted the lives of millions of children. They live with little to no access to the nutrition and resources they desperately need. Approximately thirty-one million children residing in this nation have been orphaned, and millions more face disease, malnutrition, danger, violence, and even abandonment. Some parents abandon their children simply because they have no means of providing for their needs. Their situations are devastating, and the need is dire, which I had experienced and seen in the mission fields among the tribes. Therefore, I decided to serve in NSM and win children for Christ, through spiritual formation, healthy living, and education. This has shaped my life and planted passion in me to continue in the ministry of NSM, to

reach the children in the name of God and, with the Love of Jesus Christ, to give them hope, life, and a better future.

At its best, Navjeevan ministry wants to make a lasting difference in the children's lives and ultimately provide greater opportunities to break the cycle of poverty and deficiency. I want to raise support to empower these future leaders and parishioners to transform the nation. I hope, through this holistic approach, Navjeevan can make a greater impact by restoring hope, rebuilding lives, and providing more promising futures for these thousands of believers' children.

Bangalore is a cosmopolitan city with a population of twelve million people and is known as the "Silicon Valley of India" for its numerous software firms and establishments. It also has more than 700 churches. With a population of 6% Christians it can provide a lot more ministerial support to the ministry within the church and outside in the remote areas of North India. However, the Bangalore churches' understanding of ministry is often confined to adult ministry within the city. And thereby children's ministry is usually seen as secondary and to some extent it is neglected, degraded, and not supported to its capacity. Very few churches provide support for the ministry among children, especially to North India.

Therefore, with the above interest, I would like to research the Bangalore Churches with regard to their support of children's ministry in remote areas of North India and the significance of children's ministry in today's world for tomorrow's church. This research addresses the problem by studying the understanding of children's ministry in Bangalore Churches and then orients the new vision and mission in churches to

support the ministry of Navjeevan Seva Mandal and others, especially for North Indian children's ministries.

The challenge that the researcher constantly faces in his ministry is that pastors do not understand the value of Children ministry, despite knowing the truth that the children are the future of the church. It is time for children to become a focused priority of the global church. If not, the future of the church and its faith will be in question. Therefore, the researcher wants to study this problem and offer the solution, to some extent.

### **Purpose of the Project**

The purpose of this study was to understand the perspectives of churches in Bangalore related to the importance of ministry with children and the churches' support to remote areas of North Indian children missions and to create a new vision for these churches on the significance of reaching and supporting children in and outside the church.

### **Research Questions**

The research questions helped to understand the reasons for the problem stated and brought out opportunities to find solutions.

#### **Research Question #1**

What do the pastors in this study believe about children and the church's responsibility to minister to children?

1. What do the pastors believe about God's plan for the holistic nurture of children?
2. What are the churches doing to minister to Children?

3. What do the pastors believe about the responsibility of their church to reach out and support children outside their church: children in North India or marginalized children closer to them?
4. What challenges do pastors face as they try to lead their church to invest in ministry with children in their own church and beyond?

### **Research Question #2**

What are some of the main reasons for their minimal support and what are the major challenges the pastors would face if they tried to involve their churches in supporting ministries with children in North India?

1. What do pastors and their congregations need to understand to grasp a new vision for their role in ministry with children in Bangalore and other areas of India?
2. What do pastors and their congregations need to understand about God's heart for children, the spiritual potential of children, and the importance of spiritual nurture during childhood?
3. What do pastors and their congregations need to know about ministry with children in North India that will increase their desire to support ministry with children in North Indian?

### **Research Question #3**

What are the strategic initiatives NSM leadership can develop to increase the pastoral and congregational support to the children ministry in North India?

1. What are other organizations doing to communicate a vision for ministry with children?

2. What are the means others are using to influence the Church to reach out to the current generation of children and to nurture their faith?
3. What approaches are others using to raise support for ministries with children in remote areas?
4. What insights from this study can be incorporated into a new NSM plan for promoting effective ministries with children and increased support of ministries with children in North India?
5. How can churches develop the giving to the North India children ministry from Bangalore Churches?
6. Is Fund Raising a ministry and is it necessary today?

### **Rationale for the Project**

The researcher is called and committed to raise funds for the ministry carried out among the remote areas of north India and to understand the importance of reaching children for Christ who are a responsive group, because there is an enormous increase in the population of children and they are key for tomorrow's church. Dr. Gustavo Crocker of Nazarene Compassionate Ministries International said that "Reaching the children is like seizing the opportunity for impacting the future and prepare children into major leadership." Developing Christian leaders is 'the vision of God and mission of God' and thereby the church needs to invest today to gain them for God's kingdom for years."<sup>4</sup>

The children in North India, especially in the mission field, are often taken for granted and assumed to be in a problem-free zone; in reality this is not true. India has the highest number of children in the world, and reaching a child is equal to reaching the generation. The world statistics echoes that; 80% of the Christians accept Christ as their

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<sup>4</sup> Nazarene Compassionate Ministries – New Letter: Winter 2014, p.2

Savior between ages four and fourteen, when a bare minimum of resources is spent on them and rarely do the churches in Bangalore support them. The challenge is to bring awareness to this issue so that churches give preference and invest more into children's ministry.

Theologically speaking, Children as God's Mission, it is true that children are in God's mission, and mission to the children is mandatory and an effective tool for reaching families and, in turn, generations. God often uses children to accomplish His mission; they are not only objectives but also resources for mission. They can be effective in praying for others and can play the role of prayer warriors. They can share their faith boldly and can make difference in the world missions.

Thus, personal experience, present-day reports, and biblical and theological perspectives encouraged the researcher to study this issue and will find solutions to it to by resolving, reviving, and revitalizing the significance of support to children ministry in the remote areas of North India.

### **Definition of Key Terms**

**Next Generation:** In this dissertation refers to the cohort of people born after the year 2000.

**Pastor:** A minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation. He is also called as priest, chaplain, father, and preacher.

**North India:** States include Delhi, Punjab, Haryana, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Orissa, and Maharashtra. The remote areas refer to villages in these states.

**Navjeevan Seva Mandal:** stands for New Life Service Centre.

**Second-Line Leadership:** Leaders being prepared to provide leadership to expand the ministries and to strengthen the churches.

**Human and Faith Development:** Means understanding and growth in the human behavior, social environment, and spirituality

**Children and the Church:** Communicates that, while the family is the custodian of a child's response to God, the church also has its unique responsibility towards children.

**Fundraising:** Is the process of gathering voluntary contributions of money or other resources by requesting donations from individuals, business, churches, schools, charitable foundations, or government agencies. In the researcher's case this is meant as an act of producing money for the noble cause of children's studies and salvation, which is considered as a ministry.

### **Delimitations**

The participants in the research were thirty official pastors and church elders of established churches in a 30 km radius around Banaswadi in the Northeastern sector of Bangalore city. For this study a healthy ratio between the population and sample in a Metropolitan city like Bangalore with its innumerable churches, fellowship groups, and Christian organizations would not be possible. Therefore, the researcher has chosen the limitations noted above.

Thus, though this researcher interacted with the concerned official bearers of many churches, the results here reflect the findings of the few of those church pastors which met all the criteria.

Interviews and questionnaires were done only with a small percentage of pastors in Bangalore. Finally, it is the aspect of fund raising that is discussed in a lesser level.

### **Review of Relevant Literature**

The researcher has reviewed the following literature which is relevant and helpful to further this dissertation and to meet the research objectives. Literature related to the subject is presented under the following four headings: Necessity of children ministry, Negligence of children ministry with the theological implications, and Significance and Strength of children ministry on the Biblical Principles.

Hedda Sharapan, in his book *Think of the Children First*, describes that every church has to give a proper priority for children's ministry. The article "The Need of Child Evangelism Today," written by Samsung Kim, declares that there are three fundamental reasons for the need of child evangelism today: God's message is for everyone, children are the future of the nation, and children are more likely to have many years to serve the Lord. Also, according to Dr. Robert J. Choun, "the church has been given wonderful opportunity from Scripture to feed and nurture the children in God's way; if this privilege is not utilized then the opportunity will fade away."<sup>5</sup>

Dan Brewster, in his book *Child, Church and Mission*, focuses on the Negligence of Children ministry:

He explains that they are neglected because they are not heard and seen as mini adults' and their childhood as simply a preface to adulthood. They must be seen and heard. Secondly, they are not considered as 'raw material' which can be molded or educated. In larger context of societies and churches the general notion concerning children is pessimistic as they are small and immature. Thirdly they are not considered as

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<sup>5</sup>Choun J. Robert. *The Complete handbook for Children's Ministry: How to Reach and Teach the Next Generation from Birth to Age 12*. Edinburgh: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1994. p. 20



receivers but as passive receivers, indeed, they are the most receptive, effective people group.<sup>6</sup>

Andrew D. Lester's book *Pastoral Care with Children* asserts that, "Pastoral Neglect of Children is due to their lack of training and sense of inadequacy to deal with the children ministry"<sup>7</sup>. He mentions that the suspicion of children as non-contributors and immature has to be removed from pastors. On the other hand, he reaffirms that children are parishioners too for they are in the family of God reflecting the incarnation of God.

The "Winning the Children for Christ" by D.P. Thomson brings out the "relationship of Jesus and Children and on the Church and the Child and this is more on the significance of children."<sup>8</sup> Moreover, "Weaving a Future for all Children" by Diane C. Olson establishes "the child advocacy as discipleship not as an afterthought but as the foundation for local church and community ministry." Thus, this would deal with the Missional context of doing children's ministry, as they are the future of the church.

The book *Children Matter* by the authors Stone House and Scottie May invites, Christian educators to imagine the faith journey with children for the faith formation and Pastors are encouraged to emphasize on the relationship between people and the church to welcome all children as valued participants in the people of God and calls the church to celebrate the children in the church, family and community, rather than just technology.<sup>9</sup>

Thus, children should matter for churches and should not be neglected by them.

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<sup>6</sup> Brewster Dan. *Child, Church and Mission*. Colorado: Compassion International, 2011. 1-70pp

<sup>7</sup> Lester D. Andrew. *Pastoral Care with children in crises*. Westminster: John Knox Press, 1985 p 1-100

<sup>8</sup> Thomas P. David. *Winning the children for Christ*. London: Thomson & Cowman, 1924.

<sup>9</sup> Stone house, Catherine. *Children Matter*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 2005.

Moreover, “The Nurture and Evangelism of Children” by Gideon G. Yoder speaks about “the Religion of Childhood and spiritual formation of a child in the children ministry, which is neglected today. But it is a significant contribution to the place of children in the church and the best method of leading children to faith in Christ.”<sup>10</sup>

The Significance of children’s ministry is clearly explained in the book *Children Today* by Samsung Kim. He claims that “the only way on this earth to solve the problem of reaching the masses is by getting hold of the children,” as mentoring society from childhood brings a big difference in all spheres of life. Moreover, the great history makers received the Lord as their personal Savior in their very young age.

George Barna, in his book *Transforming Children into Spiritual Champions*, says that “children who are imparted with biblical values can share the gospel boldly than adults and they can make a difference involvement in world missions.”<sup>11</sup> Author Tina Houser in her book *A Practical Guide on Building Children Ministry* offers that, “the children ministry is important because it is closer to God’s heart and highly regarded by Lord Jesus himself and also she mentions about children in Matthew: 18:3.” Second, it is important because God commanded people to reach children. According to Houser, with reference to Deuteronomy: 11:9, there is a plea for everyone to help raise up a godly generation. Finally, she points out that children’s ministry is a source of joy in Proverbs: 23:24.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> Oder G. Gideon. *The Nurture and Evangelism of Children*. Harrisonburg, VA: Herald Press, 1959

<sup>11</sup> Barna, George. *Transforming Children into spiritual champions*: Ventura, CA: Issachar Resources, 2003

<sup>12</sup> Houser, Tina. *Practical Guide on Building Children Ministry*. Indiana: Thomas Nelson Press, 2008

Finally, on the strength and advantage of children's ministry the author Jack W. Hayford, in his book *Blessing Your Children* explains that the "number of Christians being converted as children is considerably greater than those converted in advanced years."<sup>13</sup> To add to that, C.H. Spurgeon said, "the capacity for believing lies more in child than in the adult,"<sup>14</sup> for example "Moody Bible Institute's former president, Joe Stowell, accepted Christ at six and Evangelist Billy Graham made his decision at sixteen."<sup>15</sup> Thus there are greater results and the outcome is awesome in children's ministry all over the world.

The strength of the children's ministry is studied from the journal 4-14 Global Initiative where it is stated that Children are the group of people who are Enormous, Receptive, and Forgotten people, but they are evangelized, disciplined to become leaders and mission partners. They are not only the object of mission but also the agents of the mission for the future. Their strength is our strength, so they are not to be neglected or made secondary, they are to be considered and remembered.

### **Research Methodology**

The Research Methodology for the Project is a method of process in which the Research Questionnaire is discussed, and the research seeks to identify biblical roots and a missiological foundation for children ministry in its framework and to incorporate this with contextual and mission perspectives. The research focuses on the envisioning of support to the children ministry in north India.

In order to understand the concept, the researcher employed both library and empirical research (primary source). As the study involves library work, various materials

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<sup>13</sup> Hayford W. Jack. *Blessing Your Children*. Ventura, CA: Gospel Light Publications, 2002

<sup>14</sup> Spurgeon C.H. *The Soul Winner*. Alabaster: Spurgeon's Publishers: 1903

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.google.com> Joseph Stowell and Billy Graham

pertaining to the study has been collected from libraries. The library research is to increase understanding of the issues that the researcher wanted to explore in his empirical research. The libraries of SAIACS, United Theological College (UTC), and South Asia Bible College (SABC) in Bangalore formed the secondary source of information for this research. This also included Christian magazines, organizations' newsletters, journals, newspapers, websites, and reports published by the government of India. The sources extracted for this research are sufficient, and this information should be the latest.

The primary sources of information were the pastors who minister in Bangalore. Data was derived from them with the aid of a semi-structured interview to facilitate qualitative analysis. Analysis of the collected data was in reference to the biblical, as on reaching out to children in the mission field. The empirical sources are the data collection tool, namely survey questionnaire and interview.

### **Participants Interview and Questionnaire**

In this project the participants are Pastors in Bangalore, and they actively took part in the survey, questionnaire, and interviews. The researcher received assistance from the church members who were known to the researcher to contact the pastor.

**Interview:** An interview was conducted with pastors on an eight-question questionnaire.

**Questionnaire:** By using the questionnaires the researcher surveyed the thirty pastors to gather data and to have adequate understanding. The questionnaire was prepared in English and carefully translated in the vernacular languages Kannada and Tamil. Based on the empirical survey method, the search is qualitative and pre-intervention in nature.

### **Type of Research**

The pre-intervention method is preferred because of the nature of the problem under study. The term pre-intervention is used to differentiate it from an intervention approach. The pre-intervention approach is also known as the systematic process of assessment and planning, employed in this particular case to remediate or prevent further negligence of support and concern to children's ministry, especially in north India. More research needs to be done in the area of long term effectiveness of pre-intervention specific research to solve the problem and future effect.

### **Data Collection**

Prior permission was taken from the Pastors to conduct the interview. To have the clear and open response the researcher had established good rapport and explained the purpose of the research to the Pastors.

The Pastors were asked twenty-one questions. The answers to the questions were multiple choice. Pastors had the freedom to choose from the list of options given for each question. They also had the freedom to give their own opinion in the other column, apart from the given choices for each question. This was done in order to obtain a crystal-clear response. The interview sessions for ten pastors lasted between one and two hours. Other pastors were contacted individually and given questionnaires, and their answers were collected for the analysis. The tools used to collect the data are threefold: survey, questionnaires, and interviews, to analyze the reasons for their minimal support to children ministry, and its impact on it.

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher did a careful and complete scrutiny of the data collected. He classified data by arranging it in a specific order. By using the coding system, the data was categorized for information, details, statistics, and reasons. The researcher used focused “analytical comparison and illustrative methods” to finalize the finding of the empirical research. The researcher kept up the ethical values of the research project and maintained the required discipline in writing the dissertation on the children’s ministry. The data collected from the interviews with pastors were presented using bar charts and interpretive descriptions. A similar approach was deployed for the analysis of the data collected from the children.

### **Generalizability**

As there are number of Christian organizations raising funds for their children’s ministry in Bangalore and some of them for their mission fields in North India, they may repeat the same research to find out the reasons for their minimal support to children ministry and may end up discovering the same things. They may also find the calibers of people that the researcher interviewed here. The researchers’ writings are a like a recipe to follow by others, and the ultimate aim is to reach the children with the Gospel by the generous support of city churches for a Godly church tomorrow.

### **Overview of the Study**

Although the study is done on selected pastors in Bangalore, the researcher strongly believes that the outcome of this study would enable the church at large, that is bewildered by this issue, to recognize its intensity and to respond to it in the most adequate manner. The entire project is divided into five chapters. Beginning with the Nature of the Project it contains an Autobiographical introduction about the motivation of

the researcher to study this issue and then the problem statement and purpose statement, a Review of Relevant Literature, with the reading on methodology, and ends with project overview. The second chapter discusses the Literature Review for the project, with an overview and a study on Biblical foundations and theological foundations for children ministry. It goes on to discuss God's concern for children through the ministry of Jesus, as recorded in New Testament, through history, and in present ministry. Also, it explores the research design literature and ends with a summary of literature.

The third chapter assesses the research methodology for the project and discusses the research questions in which ministry contexts are studied and participants are taken as samples for the study. A criterion for selection and description of participants was mentioned. Further, this section explains the pilot test or expert review and then the procedure for collecting the evidences from participants. It highlights the procedure for analyzing the evidence collected and ends with reliability and validity of project design.

The fourth chapter outlines the descriptive evidence for the research questions and reflects the major findings, which are about the pastors' response to children ministry in the remote areas of North India. This also deals with the ministry of various churches who work among children. The fifth chapter is all about the major findings, ministry implications of the findings, limitations of study, unexpected observations, and recommendations for a remedy and meaningful support to the children ministry.

The writer hopes this work will contribute to a qualitative growth of support to children's ministry in North India and trust in God that it would meet some of the needs of the organization and church in ministering to children. Specifically, pastors would recognize the need of reaching children to reach the rising generation.

## CHAPTER 2

### LITERATURE

#### Overview

There is much literature today about children's ministry, and there are also many authors and groups doing research on children's ministry for it is about reaching the next generations. However, studies on supporting children and causes that support them seem to be rare, from one side of the country to the other. In the Indian context it is felt that difficult to raise funds, but western Churches have done their best to support children across the world through Compassion International, World Vision, Samaritan Purse, and others. In the Indian context the ability to reach North Indian mission field children through Indian churches seems to be small in size and not very well supported.

Support to the North Indian children's ministry from Bangalore Churches is much less than what they could have extended. In this Silicon Valley, the returns of the church are much higher than in other cities in India. There is a lack of comprehensive awakening on the importance of children's ministry and its future, and there is non-cooperation, a lack of vision, and a lack of lower level of support.

**All over the world, even in North India, children and youth represent the demographic that is most receptive to spiritual and developmental input.** God is calling the present church to radically change the way it views children and to help them gain their strategic importance and rightful place in His Kingdom. The church is called to see children and youth as more than a mission field to be reached. They are also a powerful mission's force affecting change in the world today, by reaching, rescuing, rooting, and releasing, them for Christ (4/14 Window aim), more than that it is reaching



generations for Christ. “India, with 1.21 billion people is the second most populous country in the world, where every year an estimated 26 millions of children are born in India which is nearly 4 million more than the population of Australia,”<sup>16</sup> However, there is a lack of strategic leadership, fewer planning initiatives, less pastoral care and little encouragement for children’s ministry.

Ministering to children is one of the most important tasks of the body of Christ and is a vital part in God’s kingdom. It is said that children have the missiological values more than any other group. Infact, the Bible values children highly and pays great attention to their development as a whole, for they are in God’s mission and vision and are the resource of mission for this world. Herbert Hoover, the 31st President of the United States, rightly said that "Children are our most valuable resource for future."<sup>17</sup> Thereby, children have to be reached with the Gospel, and it is clear that reaching children with the Gospel is equivalent to reaching the generations for Christ, but many, including some pastors, do not understand the importance of the ministry to children. The understanding of the church is that children are small and immature, and thereby today they are minimally supported, but they are in great need of such investment. This paper will address the importance of supporting children’s ministry in North India with biblical and theological foundations. The purpose of this study is to educate Bangalore Churches on the importance of children’s ministry in North India.

This chapter is divided into four primary sections. The first contains a review of some biblical precedents and theological justifications on the significance of children’s ministry. The second part is on the response of the church and children’s ministry with

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<sup>16</sup> Jayalakshmi Sri. Children in India 2012 – A Statistical Appraisal. New Delhi: Social Statistics Division, 2012 p. 24

<sup>17</sup> Navjeevan Souvenir. Chennai: Meipporul Press, 2005 p. 1

the role of Bangalore Churches. The third part contains the significance and challenges of children's ministry, and the fourth one wraps up with fundraising ideas and a summary of the literature.

### **Biblical Foundations of Children Ministry**

God, through the Bible, says much to the pastors and leaders of Bangalore Churches. God highlights the unique place children have in His heart and the unique ministry opportunities with children.

In Proverbs, God says: "Start children off on the way they should go, and even when they are old they will not turn from it." (Prov: 22:6) This is about raising children and can also be considered as reaching children. This verse gives a promise of *good returns* on initial investments of children's ministry for young children. This is better than at other ages, and it helps churches reach children. When God's word is used to train children, it is a blessing for them for many years, for God's word in Isaiah assures the church that God's word always works and returns with good returns (Preston T. Bailey 348).

As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways

and my thoughts than your thoughts.

As the rain and the snow come down from heaven,

and do not return to it without watering the earth

and making it bud and flourish,

so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,

so is my word that goes out from my mouth:

It will not return to me empty, but will accomplish what I desire

And achieve the purpose for which I sent it. (Isaiah: 55: 9-11).

The Bible observes children as signals of divine blessing. According to John T. Carroll, the birth of a child signals the divine blessing in the family.<sup>18</sup> Psalmist says, “Children are heritage from the Lord and a reward from Him” (Ps.127.3). More than that, they are fully human, made in the image of God (Gen.1:26-27). This means children, even infants, are created in the image of God, and it is regardless of tribe, language, gender, color, and caste.

Second, children are recipients of God’s justice and compassion, and the elders of Israel were instructed to teach their children in a godly manner for they are the accomplishers of His plans and purpose. Jesus had a heart for children, and they were drawn to Him. Children were involved in the life of Jesus (Mt. 1:5, 9:17-27, Lk. 8:40-56, Jn. 6. 6:1) and perhaps nothing upsets Jesus more than “hindering” the children (Mt. 1:5). Jesus emphasized that they have guardian angels with some very special access (Mt. 18:10). He even talked about punishment for anyone who would abuse a child. He highlights that children matter to God and so God’s priorities should matter to people. The church is called to celebrate children’s place in the church, family, and community.

The research of George Barna illustrated that “children are the most important population segment to minister to because of their spiritual teachability and developmental vulnerability. Their faith developed when they are young and as they get older they are vulnerable to more distraction and influence to non-family influences.” Also, in Barna’s research it is found that “children converted to Christianity before their teen years are more likely to remain absolutely committed to Christianity and what they learn in pre-teen will remain for their life” (White, “Importance of Children Ministry 10 -

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<sup>18</sup> Carroll. T. John. Jesus and the Gospels. Paperback – October 26, 2016.

15). Early impressions go a long way toward shaping a person's worldview, relationships, dreams, expectations, and core reality.

In childhood people are open-minded and suggestible, and thereby, one can have the influence on their soul and future while they are young. Moreover, one can have a significant influence on the development of a person's moral and spiritual foundations. The Christian relief organization World Vision has also declared that the child evangelism movement is a very important evangelism movement in the 21st century.

Dan Brewster argues that children should be targeted for evangelism because the "clay is still soft" and argued "Children need our attention more urgently than any other group of people."<sup>19</sup> It is true that every major movement in history targeted the next generation in order to advance its agenda and secure its legacy into the future.

Dan Brewster argued that "The poor and exploited tend to be much more receptive to the Gospel" and that children and young people should be targeted in areas where disease, poverty, and conflict have disrupted their lives (Child Evangelism Movement).

In fact, the conversion is high between the ages of 6-12 (46%) and 13-14 (15%) while over age 20 is less than 20% percentage (CEF). Therefore, reaching children and supporting children's ministry is an imperative to fulfill the great commission of God.

### **Children in the Biblical Tradition**

In Gen:12:1-3, God considered the children as one of his greatest blessing and of great value. Abraham learned from the story of his attempt to sacrifice Isaac that children are never to be offered as sacrifices (Gen: 22; Lev. 18:21) but instead to be valued. It is evident that women and children were part of Jesus' Ministry (Mt.14:210). Despite the

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<sup>19</sup> Brewster Dan. Child, Church and Mission. Colorado: Compassion International, 2011. 1-70pp

fact that women and children were belittled in the society of the day, the authors of the Gospels placed them among God's people, full pledged to experience "the divine grace of god revealed Jesus" (Barton 100).

### **Children in the Jewish World**

Children play a significant role in the Old Testament, Jewish Tradition. They are considered to be "divine gift and sign of God's blessing" which was the fundamental basis of God's blessing upon humanity, Gen: 1:27-28(Gundry – Volf 470).In the light of this tradition barrenness was considered to be shameful (I Sam.1:10-11) since children were not only perceived as blessings but also a "great source of joy" (Ps:127:3-5,128:3)

Children gained their identity from their family, the primary social structure. Similarly, the continuity of life after death was obtained through procreation (Gen. 48:16, 2 Sam 18:18). It was part of their tradition for "parents and community to teach and pass on the faith to the children." Jewish tradition distinguished themselves from the practices of their other contemporaries by rejecting the harsh practices toward children, including abortion. Also, in biblical history, children are also included in all other major Jewish festivals (Greenberg 17). Not only are they expected to be a part of the community's affairs, but they are also expected to take part in religious celebrations.

### **Children in the Greco-Roman World**

The place of children in the Greco-Roman society is rather difficult to communicate because it highlights two contrasts. On the one hand, "parents loved and took pleasure in their children" and valued their role in their economic survival and well-being (quoted Amy Lindeman Allen –Dissertation). "Children were also classified as part of the kinship tradition, to carry family name. Within the religious contexts, children

were portrayed as blameless, chaste, and immature, for they considered as channels of God's blessing" (Greenberg 197). Interestingly, children were accepted as individuals, part of the households, and they obtained their identity through this social structure.

On the other hand, "childhood was viewed largely as a state of immaturity to outgrow." Children were judged within this fact or by their physical stature, their underdeveloped and vulnerable nature, and because of this they were not allowed to participate as Roman Citizens and in the social hierarchy they occupied a lowly place. Hence, Jesus' use of children as "exemplary of faith" probably stood against the policy of the Greco-Roman societies. They were considered to be part of the family, but not accepted to be in the level of examples for entering the kingdom of God.

### **Children in the Early Church**

Two aspects of the life of children are observed in the early church. Generally, they lived within the household in a social structure which was dominantly patriarchal in nature and were also "accepted as part of the Christian Community" (Stamps 200). "Mostly, children are used in the metaphorical references particularly in the Epistles, though the social convention basically places them in relation to the parents for disciplining an instruction" (Eph. 6:1-4; Col, 3:20-21) (Gundry Volf 48). Moreover, the children were seen as participants in Christian faith (Acts: 2:39), and their presence is seen in the early Christian gatherings. (Acts 11:14, 16:15, 20:9, 12, 21:5, Mt. 14:21). The early Gospel tradition also seems to present children as identity markers for the disciples to aspire and adopt, Mt. 18: 1-5.

## **The Bible and Children**

The Bible is not silent on children, and God's heart poured out for children. God's expectation is that all children will develop as Jesus did, "in wisdom, in stature, and in favour with God and men" (Luke:2:52), but many children do not have this opportunity. Development is not a biblical term, but the idea is certainly present in terms that express the ideas of growth and revelation.

The New Testament confirms the high regard Jesus had for children. There were many incidents involving children in His life: the boy who offered Jesus the loaves and fishes, the son of the widow of Nain (Luke 7:11-17), and the daughter of the Canaanite women (Matthew: 15:22). Their presence in the biblical record confirms their significance to Jesus.

Throughout the Bible it is evident that God has high regard for children's ability to understand the faith and to participate in His redemption by maintaining personal purity, by obeying God's word(Ps:119:9), by being exemplary in their speech, love, and faith (I Tim: 4:12), and by pursuing godly virtues (2 Timothy 2:22).

To Jesus, children were living examples of what the kingdom was all about. "Truly, I say to you if you are like a child you will receive the kingdom of God" (Mark: 10:15). It was Jesus who commended children over and over as meaning-makers, spiritual pilgrims, and active participants with God-given ministry on earth.

Jesus did use children to teach kingdom truths. It is imperative that the church and society should see children and young people as individuals who can transform a generation and change the world. Jesus said children belong to the kingdom of God, but the church has often underestimated the value and potential of children.

The world values survey findings highlight the conclusion that intergenerational changes are taking place in basic values related to politics, economics, religion, gender roles, family, and sexual norms. The values of the younger generation consistently differ from those prevailing among older generations and are transforming social, economic, and political life, in some cases displacing thousands of years of tradition in the span of a single generation. (Patrick Johnson 11)

### **Children in the Old Testament and New Testament**

Children and youth as agents of God's work is not a new concept. In both the Old Testament and the New Testament God frequently uses children and young people to transform their world. Throughout Scriptures God entrusts special truths to children and used them as His special messengers or instruments.

A young Israelite girl who served Naaman's wife tells about the prophet Elisha (2 Kings 5:2). Through Samuel God delivered a needful but hard note to the high priest, Eli. Samuel's sensitivity to God's leading and his ready obedience was exemplary (I Sam. 3).

David, as a youth, was used by God, when his brothers and father did not consider him to be worthy. Josiah was a boy-king through whom God reformed the religious social state of his people (2 Kings 22). His rule was considered righteous rule, and he made dramatic reforms as a teenager and young man (2 Chronicles: 34).

Esther was an orphan who, while probably in her teens, became queen, and God used her to save the Jewish people from annihilation (Esther: 2).

Timothy had biblical faith from childhood and later matured through instructions (2 Timothy 1:5, 2:2; 3:14-15). Even Paul had entrusted the churches to Timothy's personal care.



“It is not just these people happened to be children,” writes Keith White, Director of the Child Theology Movement, “but that some of the most significant acts and revelations of God were through these children, their faith and actions are critically important in unfolding and outworking of God’s purposes.”

In the Gospels children are known by the words “little child.” This most likely applies to children, infants, or the growing child (Mt. 2: 8 - 9, 11, Lk: 1:59). There are a number of instances in the gospels where Jesus encounters children. Jesus’ attitude such as “welcoming” the children and “blessing” them is presumed to be like of Jacob Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen.4) (Barton 101)

In the Gospel of Mark there are a few narratives where Jesus interacts with children, either directly or indirectly (Mk 5:39-41; 7:27-30); 13:12). The narrative of Jesus raising Jairus’ daughter from dead is perhaps the first encounter with children in Mark (5:39-41).

Second, Jesus’ encounter with the demon-possessed girl (Mk 7: 27-30). Here, Jesus’ welcoming attitude towards children not only implies identifying himself with the helpless or the so-called “vulnerable” members but also demonstrates to the disciples the importance of serving the child even though it might be considered a humiliating task (Witherington 270). Jesus uses children in relation to the Kingdom of God.

Children in Luke seem to occupy the spot with the marginalized. It emphasizes “the gracious mercy of God toward the poor, the weak and the marginal” (Barton 103).

Mathew’s narrative includes a number of incidents where Jesus either uses children as metaphors or mentions them (Mt. 3:9; 7:11). Mathew draws attention to Jesus’ use of children as the subject of good and evil Mt. 7:11).

Understanding the state of children within the biblical tradition is significant. Children were used both as people and as a metaphor in Jesus' teaching and ministry. Nevertheless, as mentioned by Barton "the phenomenon of understands the developmental stage of children should in no way be used to read back into the Gospels, despite its appeal" (Barton 105).

Jesus exhibited a special concern for children. He insisted that his disciples allow children to approach him, and when the children did, he put his hands on them and blessed them (Matt. 19:13-15). Pointing to a child, he told the adults nearby that they must become like the child in order to enter the kingdom and that everyone who welcomed a child also welcomed Jesus (Matt: 18:1-5). On several occasions he healed children, and he used the lunch of a youth to feed five thousand people (Matt. 17:18). He employed the world children as a metaphor for his followers: "If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father in heaven give good things to those who ask him!" (Matt.7:11, Luke: 11:13).

### **Theological Foundations**

Theologically, to reach children is to reach the next generation for His kingdom. According to Frederick Douglass "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men,"<sup>20</sup> and the words of the great evangelist Dwight L. Moody also emphasize the importance of children's ministry, in that, "If I could relive my life, I would devote my entire ministry to reaching children for God."<sup>21</sup> In contexts like India children's ministry should be human and faith concerned, so that it involves evangelism and social services (education); these are two sides of the same coin and complement

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<sup>20</sup> Douglass Frederick. Frederick Douglass Great Speeches. New York: Dover Publications, 2013

<sup>21</sup> Williams A.W. Life and Work of Dwight L. Moody: The Great Evangelist of the 19<sup>th</sup> Century. New York: Cosimo books, 2007

each other in helping the development of individuals and society. Anything done systematically is fruit-bearing and will last a long time (Jesudas M. Athyal). For these reasons and due to the vast need of the mission field, Navjeevan Seva Mandal, in its passion for reaching children for God, takes the responsibility sincerely to meet the needs of the “the whole person” with love and the compassion of Jesus Christ.

The greatest hope for the local church lies in raising Godly children. In India every year many parents are brought to faith in Christ because one of their children was changed by his or her own relationship with the Lord, and the parent could not ignore the power of Christ any longer. Moreover, the minister and elders carry the great responsibility of creating a proper image of the church in the mind of the child.

It is often said that childhood is the best phase of a person’s life. Unlike adults, children are endowed with an innocence which leaves no room for worry or anxiety about the future. They are to be perceived as innocent and sinners, possessions and dependent, vulnerable, incomplete, and invisible.

### **Children Reflect the Image of God’s Kingdom.**

Hope arises as one sees the greater result of children becoming god’s agents of transformation even in their youth. The engagement of and time and efforts will not be in vain but will harvest the agents of transformation.

The gospel writers presented the kingdom of God from the child’s perspective. Mathew presents them as children who are apparently old enough to stand (Mt.18: 2), Luke refers to them as babies, not entering or receiving the Kingdom of God. Children are set as models for entering the Kingdom of God, which significantly highlights the

sign of entering and receiving. This was against the Greco-Roman setting where any sort of comparison with children is considered an insult (Gundry Volf 472).

### **Children are Signs of Hope**

The Victorian cleric and academic Henry Scott Holland (1847 – 1918) understood children as signs of hope. They are real and are for worshiping God, and they give hope to the church. Children are not simply receivers from the adults in the church; they are also givers. Children give themselves; they are to be allowed in church for they bring spontaneity and a creativity to worship. They encourage church services to be more participatory and active.

### **Children are Leaders**

The question of leadership of children was comprehensively answered by the Lord Jesus in Mathew, Chapter 18. The disciples were engaged in a distasteful quarrel about who is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven. To teach a lesson to the disciples and the crowd Jesus called a child into their midst and said a leader should be like a child. Children have wonderful qualities that adults have no idea about. “Children have the sterling leadership qualities in abundance” (Chandrasekhar 9) like the ability to dream outrageous dreams, boldness to speak the simple truth, purity of purpose, and an unencumbered hope of a better world.

Every single child, even the most normal of them, have abnormal vision and energy. Kids are outstanding leaders, and other people ought to unabashedly learn from them. The Bible has numerous examples of child leaders. The young and tender David was a powerful protector of his sheep, showing remarkable courage and responsibility whenever required. Eight-year-old Josiah held the kingdom of Judah together and steered

the entire nation into a righteous path. An inconsequential slave girl pointed her master Naaman to the prophet Elisha, which led to his healing. A simple gift from a child fed five thousand luxuriously.

Children are undoubtedly blessed with great leadership skills. Children are born leaders, but, to turn them into complete leaders, parents and care takers have to play a critical role. It is a God-given responsibility to carefully nurture kids, boost their confidence without making them arrogant, challenge them without overwhelming them, and love them deeply while teaching them to love unconditionally too. It is like polishing uncut diamonds to ensure a brilliant shine.

Most importantly, people need to instill the right values in children, and these values must be so deep that the storms of life cannot damage them. The essence of leadership is selflessness and generosity, which is so different from the distressing selfishness of this age. The right perspectives need to be encouraged with the right values, the right vision, and the right attitude. Children should be provided with the right skills and knowledge. For “we have a force; more powerful than dynamite, our younger generation has the unimaginable power of transformative leadership.”<sup>22</sup> One should never be guilty of underestimating or neglecting the little children, but instead do all to value them and build them up.

### **Children Matter to Child**

The bible says that children are a blessing from God. While Jesus was on earth he affirmed their value and that they matter to God. God prioritizes them for theirs is the kingdom of God, and they are created in His own image. Children matter to God. They should matter to everyone in the church and the Christian community too. Jesus reminds

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<sup>22</sup> Dr. R. Chandrasekhar, Director, NSM in Silver Jubilee, Sevoor, 2010.

believers in the book of Matthew not “to make the mistake of thinking that little children are unimportant” (Matthew: 18:20). People need to obey Jesus’ words.

## **Children and the Church**

### **The Pastor and Children**

The unique role of the pastor as a spiritual leader is to equip people to do the ministry they have been called to do (Eph. 4:11,12). Pastors have to give encouragement and a framework of support through which the ministry of God’s people can be accomplished. The Pastor in this system has the primary leadership role in monitoring the church process and being effective in achieving its God given mission which has spiritual awards and blessings.

### **The Pastoral Neglect of Children**

While the significance of children is this much, to some extent pastors and the ministerial community neglects them. Some of them think of childhood as the golden age of innocence, a time to play and nothing to worry about. This is not true as children experience fears, anxieties, embarrassments, self-doubts, shame, resentments and other inner turmoil. All the more their soul is to be equally valued and honored.

Also, they think that of children as non-contributors. Many pastors do not give pastoral care to children because they do not return the favor and do not give money, provide leadership, teach in church schools, or serve on committees. They do not even praise sermons, affirm leadership, or give thanks. However, according to Andrew D. Lester “winning them is more important pastoral work and in later they will contribute it back and many would become major motivation behind pastoral involvement. Child evangelism should meet the child’s needs, not the pastor’s.”

### **Children are Parishioners Too**

True, children are to be considered as parishioners for they are the future leaders of the church and pillars to represent Christ to this world and to their society. In this current world, children and youth have to be a focused priority for the local church and outside. They are not only the church of the future but the present church too.

### **Criticism of Children's Ministry**

Evangelists of children's ministry utilize the children's young age and do things like use picture books to communicate religious concepts to children who are too young to read. On the other side, critics critique this practice of reaching out to children as they are too young to read or understand for themselves and make an informed, independent decision about what religion they belong to. The critics question the alter calls used by preachers. Theologian Randal Rauser has criticized the practice of "conversionism," which emphasizes immediate change in religion, rather than a gradual transformation of life and belief. He has also criticized the targeting of young children, who can be easily influenced into confessing belief in things they do not understand simply to please adults (Child Evangelism Movement).

The Roman Catholic Church maintains that children do not have moral responsibility before the Age of Reason at eight years old and that Holy Communion may be administered to children only if "they have sufficient knowledge and careful preparation so that they understand the mystery of Christ according to their capacity" (Child Evangelism Fellowship).

Meanwhile, many Protestant Christians have expressed concern that due to conversion at a young age or false conversion in childhood, these children tend to grow

up to have a false understanding of the religion, and this practice has led to the widespread secularization of Europe and North America (Child Evangelism Movement).

### **Significance of Children Ministry**

The early church continued to display a concern for the well-being of children. Children were welcomed into the new community, the church (Acts: 16:15). Synagogues had given importance to children as they taught Torah and Law In both the Old and New Testaments; children were considered a blessing from God. Protestant ancestors John Calvin, Jonathan Edward, and John Wesley also believed that reaching children is important for the continuation of the universal Church (Felton 96). Wesley considered family, including children, a small church (Outler 309). Thus, ministry to children is historically and biblically significant.

Dr. Rick Warren points out that "The practice of targeting specific kinds of people for evangelism is a biblical principal of ministry. It's as old as the New Testament. Jesus targeted his ministry; publicly he identified his ministry target as the Jews. So, there should be target in reaching children."<sup>23</sup>

Probably the most convincing argument for why targeting children's ministry for evangelism can be the most effective is research on the probability of people accepting Jesus Christ as their savior for a lifetime relationship. Research by George Barna and the Barna Institute of over 1,000 adults in May 2001 puts this probability at 32% for children between 5 and 13 years old at time of conversion, 4% for children between ages 14 and 18, and 6% for people 19 years and older. In other words, attracting younger children to a church to learn about the Love of God can have five to eight times the impact of attracting the same number of grown-up children or adults (White Hutchinson). This is

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<sup>23</sup> Warren, Rick. *The Purpose-Driven Life*. Grand Rapids: Zondervan: 2002



very true in the Indian context and even in NSM mostly younger children are admitted and nurtured for the Lord with good education.

Furthermore, Barna's research on faith development and discipleship also found that the moral development of children is complete by age nine. Non-religious oriented research on children's moral and values development substantiates that the foundation for lifelong values and morals are formed at the earliest years of the child (White, *Importance of Children Ministry* 10 -15).

The May 2001 Barna research also showed that church attendance by children has a lifelong impact. The majority (61%) of adults who attended church as children still attend regularly, while only 22% of those who were not churchgoers as children attend church today. Early churchgoing also has an impact on whether parents bring their children to church. For parents who were church members as children, 63% take their own children to church, while those who did not go to church in their childhood will take their children to church only 33% of their time.

George Barna states, the research is very clear: if Jesus is not already part of their lives by the time they leave junior high school, the chances of them accepting Him as their Lord and savior is very slim (6%, to be exact). With children, it is just the opposite. Because of the challenges and insecurities they face in life, they are very open to being a part of a community of like-minded people who grow together. Children have a tremendous influence within their families and on the choices they make in all areas of life. (White, *Importance of Children Ministry* 10 -15)

In the ideas of UNICEF, "The first seven years [of life] constitute the period for laying the foundations of religion. It is the very important period in the whole of a

person's life in determining his later religious attitudes.”<sup>24</sup> It is not just childcare; it is touching the hearts and minds of children. Moreover, according to Tina Houser, “Children Ministry is about building followers of Christ. As, there is a greatest evangelical window currently available is among young children, reaching them is significance.”<sup>25</sup> The following reasons explain the significance of ministry of children.

**It is Close to God’s Heart.** Children’s ministry is important because it is close to the heart of God. In Matthew 18:3, God elevates children by saying “unless you turn your sins and become like little children, you would will never get into the kingdom of Heaven.” God targeted children in the Old and New Testaments, for the foundation of lifelong values and morals are formed at the earliest years.

According to George Barna “attracting younger children to learn about the Love of God will have 5 to 8 times the impact of attracting the same number of older children or adults,” and, “The practice of targeting specific kinds of people for evangelism is a biblical principal of ministry”.<sup>26</sup>

**God Commanded It.** God has commended all people to reach children, for this has a life-long impact. Deuteronomy 32:36 NLT says, “Pass them on as a command to your children so they will obey every word of these instructions.” Thus God has commanded people to raise a godly generation.

**It is a Source of Joy.** Getting children to connect on a spiritual level is important and a source of joy. God gives joy through raising up Godly children, Proverbs 23:24. Moreover, it is like receiving Jesus. In Mark 9:37 Jesus said, “Whoever receives one of

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<sup>24</sup> Facts for life – Fourth Edition: Child Development and Early Learning - network

<sup>25</sup> Tina Houser. *Building Children Ministry*: Thomas Nelson, 1978. p10-50

<sup>26</sup> Barna, George; *Re-Churching the Unchurched*. Ventura, CA: Issachar Resources, 2000.

these little children in my name receives Me; and whoever receives Me, receives not Me but Him who sent Me.”

As a blessing children’s ministry helps the church to pass on the faith to their next generation through their talents and spiritual gifts. It brings joy to the church to see children grow through the years, and they will have additional fellowship in the church. With children present there is a greater sense of excitement and hope about the future of the church and Christianity.

### **Why Children’s Ministry**

The greatest evangelical window currently available is among young children (George Barna). There are nearly two billion children in the world today, which is one third of the world’s population. It is often said that childhood is the best phase of a person’s life. Unlike adults, children are endowed with an innocence which leaves no room for worry or anxiety about the future. Unfortunately, poverty forces many children to lose their childhood very early in life. The worries of life catch up with them faster, filling them with a sense of defeat for being born without wealth (Dan Brewster).

Dan Brewster in his book *Child, Church and Mission* says that, “Children are the most in need people on the planet. Never in history have we had so many children among us and never have so many of them been at a great social risk. Children age 15 and younger comprise one-third of India, an additional 26 percent are young people ages 15-29” (The World Values Survey). The study reveals that another one billion children may be born in the next decade and many of those into extreme poverty. Hence, reaching them with the Gospel of Christ and development becomes the responsibility of the existing

well-established churches, mostly from urban to rural, like Bangalore to North Indian rural villages in the mission fields.

The children of today are the future of tomorrow, and children comprise one-third of the total population in the India. Every child, on provision of encouragement and an enabling environment, may blossom into an ever-fragrant flower, to shine in all spheres of life. This reminds Christians of the heavy responsibility that they should mold and shape children and their environments in the best possible way.

Moreover, in God's hands this enormous group of people can become agents of transformational mission under the headship of Jesus Christ. If they are reached and transformed in their childhood, then they can impact others and continue to impact them for the rest of their lives, but there is ministry poverty which means for them there is a scarcity of opportunities to exercise their gifts and achieve their potential in ways that honor God and advance His kingdom. Therefore, it is crucial that mission efforts be re-prioritized, re-directed and supported towards children's ministry.

Therefore, James, in his Kingdom Perspective, says that, one must be aware of what is happening in children's lives and willing to endeavor to understand their nature and the essential means to nurture them. Only with this kind of informed awareness will one be able to reach them, change them, and raise them up to transform the world. They will be transformed and always transformed. This is possible under the headship of Christ (Eph: 1:9-10).

As 4/14 Window founder Dr. Luis Bush said, the children also can be called as "Core of Core and through them there is a golden age of opportunity to transform the world."

It is true that, from mission's standpoint, the interest in children's ministry is not only because children are the most receptive, but also because, they are often the most effective agents for mission. Therefore, the church and mission are called for action. There is a need to think strategically and act decisively to reach, protect, inspire, and equip this generation to transform the world. If not, the entire generation would be lost.

The statistics reveals a vast spiritual harvest. Most churches, Christian organizations, and mission agencies have their focus primarily on adults. For the larger group, of children, there are fewer personnel, minimal funds, and limited creativity. Churches must prioritize reaching the world's largest, most receptive and most moldable group. Like in adult ministry, children's ministry must be creative, cautious, discerning, and holistic in reaching out to those in Christian settings.

**Important for Children, Families, Churches, and Society.** Children's ministry is importance for them because children face many challenges and risks in their social, relational, intellectual, spiritual, and physical lives and at different stages of their life. One should not underestimate what God can do in and through kids in society. Their major crises are extreme poverty, child labor, malnutrition and plagues, the sex trade, street children, child abuse, and crimes among children. More minor crises include child marriage and lack of education.

The ministry is necessary for the following causes: to release children from their spiritual economic, social, and physical poverty, to help them become responsible and fulfilled Christian adults, to teach them to be Christian in faith and deed, and to show them how to support themselves and share with others in need, to be responsible

members of family, church, and community in nation, and to maintain their own physical well-being.

In India half the population is below the age of twenty-five and one-third below age fifteen, but church services are oriented to those above age thirty, and the church is generally run by the members in their sixties and above. Outside, the world, especially in advertising and media, is targeting children and the young; the youth are being drawn away from the church, which is seen as irrelevant. If the church does not want to lose their members over the next generation or so, the church has to change and begin to address the needs and interests of this generation (CEF). Therefore, today's church needs to develop programs that would supplement teachings about God, for parents are not keen on teaching scripture. Many parents put more emphasis on the school education of their children than their growth in the knowledge of God.

Moreover, there are no role models for the children among the people they trust. It is only friends and the social media that act as role models for them. It is not enough to teach children, but they must be treated well and have strong relationships. The children in the Sunday school should have role models to imitate. Teach values as these are most important for the very survival of man, both in this world and the world to come.

Academic proficiency is not the end of all learning, but security, creativity, and creating self-worth in children is important. More than education or mansions, what children need especially when they are young is security. They feel secure when they are loved, when they are accepted, and when they do not feel rejected. More than the presents it is presence that makes a difference.

Children must know that they are valued beyond measure. One may or may not be able to give them riches, wealth, and treasures, but every parent can give out their rich hearts. “Security, Significance and Self-Worth, these three by means of relationships will keep children emotionally strong, mentally agile and spiritually seeking – all their lifelong” (Samson Gandhi 7).

In bringing up children there should be a fair walk (Is: 9:9) between son and daughter, and even when one raises children in a selective culture it should be as per the word of God, for having friendship with the worldly system (dowry) in enmity with God.

Children’s ministry brings the truth of the gospel to children where they are, and children go home with questions, stories, and lessons they learned. An effective children’s ministry sparks conversations at home and this challenges and encourages the whole family. The questions, memories, and stories of children challenge the faith of family members. It encourages them to learn the gospel and helps the truth get into their own souls more (Eric Geiger).

Children bring joy and life to a church. They sing loud, raise their hands, fight to sit in front, and do not fill up the back seats first. They answer when the preacher asks a question. They open their Bibles and love to hear stories from the Word.

Children who understand God’s moral law and how to love their neighbors will make the world a better place. Surely, children’s ministry benefits public schools and industry and is good for their future employers and spouses.

Children play a positive impact in their parents’ lives, attracting them to the church and making them more involved in church activities. Jennifer Hooks said that, Children’s ministry is a major method for getting families involved in ministry.

“God uses children ministry to minister to the whole family” (Jennifer Hooks).

**Children are Open to Learning and to Trusting God.** There is a season, sometime between the ages four and fourteen, when people are most moldable than they will ever be in their lifetime. It is when people are forming their understanding of the world, of relationships, of life, and of God. It is a season when people are impressionable.

Churches should be intentional about ensuring that children get the right impression (Matt Guevara). Moreover, this helps them come to church, love others, and learn the truth. They learn to read scripture, pray aloud in public, do peer-to-peer evangelism, provide opportunity to re-teach the Gospel, accept help to maximize their spiritual development, and allow themselves to increase their knowledge of the Bible and God himself.

**It Impacts their Entire Life.** An adult who comes to the Lord has already spent much of his life. Kids still have their entire lives before them; Dwight L. Moody first made this point. Therefore, adult ministry requires more worker involvement. It is true that God will pour out His financial blessings on a church that invests in reaching and discipling children.

**Children are the Greatest Mission Field.** Sates show that 85% of people who come to Christ do so before the age of eighteen. The church must invest its time and resources where it will see the biggest harvest. One of the biggest investments the church can make is in's children ministry for it will pay for itself many times over.

**Builds the Future of the Church.** God intends that Christians should win people in the days of their youth while their hearts are young and sensitive. What they should do is to work with God in His seasons (Albert Gage). When one reaches children, parents are also



reached. One can have the greatest worship and messages this way, along with church growth, and children are the engine for this blessing. In addition, this brings unchurched families and new families in contact with the Gospel and provides an opportunity for prayers, biblical counseling, and salvation. It also helps to train future church leaders and built a strong youth ministry.

### **Challenges in Children Ministry**

The challenge today before the church is to raise today's children to see and experience the abundant life Jesus that promised (John10.10) in order to be freed from spiritual, mental, physical, relational, economic, and social poverty.

Today's children and their older siblings are often called the Internet Generation, because the internet is their primary influencer. While their parents are digital immigrants, these children are digital natives. In some parts of the world there may not be internet facilities, but in the global village more and more young people from all parts of the world are becoming connected and are correspondingly influenced by the culture of Western materialism and self-indulgence. They are also given labels such as "Digital Kids" or "Millennials," and this suggests that "they are vastly different in culture and world view." Today's generation wants their opinions heard, and they want to make a difference, but they are also creative and open with their feelings. They are living in a postmodern age in which there is an eradication of values and a different approach to self-identity, to their home, and to society (Dan Brewster 5,11). Moreover, they use Face Book, YouTube, Twitter, and WhatsApp, and they don't think twice before sharing their opinions online with strangers whom they call friends. Thus technology is a powerful vehicle for change, but it is also a powerful poison that can bring destruction.

Today's children are riding a technological wave into the future. More than any previous generation, they are plugged in 24/7, with a world of communication and information at their fingertips. "The youth of today, due to the strong influence of technology in their everyday lives are constantly confronted with the problem of self-definition" (Katz 13).

These trends are disheartening for children's workers and can lower their self-esteem and affect their view on the value of the work. As a result, some will even give up. Children are treated as passive beings, as people to be kept occupied in the hope that they may become useful to the church in future. They are not engaged with fellow disciples and encouraged in their spiritual growth.

There is no formal education on or an obligation to have an education on the aspects of a ministry among children. In the churches there is not a designated person to ensure that there is any advice or training in children's ministry. One-third of the population is under twenty-five, but one-third of church budgets (or even a tenth of it) is not invested in youth and children's ministry. There may even be no assigned budget.

**The Spiritual Challenges.** Most people who decide to follow Christ will do so before their fifteenth birthday. Worldwide it is true that most of them take this decision between the ages of four and fourteen, and during the 20<sup>th</sup> century, this age group was the largest source of new believers for the churches.

**Financial Challenges.** There is a lack of support by church leaders because they think that children's ministry is babysitting, believe that children cannot be born again or serve God. These leaders should think differently. If there is a lack of resources, it is due to financial cries and the interests of leaders of the church.

There may be financial challenges, but still the church needs to have budgets, programming, and staff for children, instead of investing on elaborate programs and events to save the prodigals children then (Matt Guevara). Perhaps Jesus put the child in the midst of His ministry, and therefore the church should put the child in the midst of the church. God blesses this approach, and honestly, it is the most strategic use of resources and would bear the most fruit for the kingdom of God in the future.

**Geographical Challenges (4/14 Booklet): The Urban Challenge.** The people of the 21<sup>st</sup> century will live in an urban world for the first time. Currently 50% of the world lives in an urban setting and by the end of the century this will increase to 80%. Therefore, the century will necessitate pioneer missionaries who will give their lives to the city (Luish Bush, Prominent strategist and the originator of the 10/40 Window Movement).

**The Social Challenge.** Social responsibility has been recognized and affirmed in the last twenty-five years as an essential component of Christ's Great Commission. Forced child prostitution, malnutrition, and street and orphan children keep increasing. Moreover, infectious diseases continue to spread and kill millions of children.

**The People Challenge.** More research, church planting efforts, literature production, Jesus Film distribution, scripture translation, and youth ministers are required.

**The Ideological Challenge.** There is a need to have innovative approaches to counter the present worldview and social and legal systems. Worst of all, nominal Christians have settled for a form of godliness with no power. This challenge must be tackled.

Over the past decades it has been learned that ministry done among children is not in vain, rather it creates an avenue to present the gospel to them. If they are reached, their generation is reached. The heart of the transformation is the transformation of the heart (4/14 Window 18). The central need is spiritual in nature. This is clear from God's word where He reveals His perfect plan to reverse the effects of the fall of His creation. Spiritual transformation does not only mean the forgiveness of sins. It encompasses all of life re-created by God.

The founder of 4/14 Window says that, transformation doesn't not mean behavior modification or a striving to make the world a better place. Transformation entails a passionate seeking after God, submitting to His power, and allowing His reign over every facet of life according to His design and plan.

Barna observes that, "By the age of 13, spiritual identity is largely set in place in a child and if he or she is reached and discipled then their life perspectives and worldview will be shaped well and it cannot be easily moved."

Every child is innately a good person. Every child has the ability to change for the better. Every child has a right to salvation. Every child can be saved in this life if provided with proper Gospel with love (Alexander Philip – God's Children). God is indeed the Lord of all generations, and His heart's desire is to raise up the next generation of Esther's and Daniels as agents of transformation to bring His loving deliverance to this world.

### **Fund Raising a Ministry**

Fundraising's goal is to help people through God's name for His glory. As Sir Winston Churchill, English Statesman, said, "We make a living by what we get; we make

a life by what we give.” According to Bernard Russell “it is preoccupation with possessions, more than anything else that prevents persons from living freely and nobly.” To live a God-given life, giving is the best medicine.

### **Need for Fundraising**

Every ministry organization requires funding to accomplish their mission. For fundraising to be effective, one should communicate well by telling a story and then being specific on the request and including a personal letter. Carefully-crafted appeal letters can both build relationships and generate funds for the organization. Many people do not like fundraising or fundraisers for it is somewhat unpleasant, but it is necessary for it supports causes which are honorable and even spiritual (Henri Nouwen -67).

Using Scripture as the basis, Nouwen makes a compelling case: Fundraising is not a response to crisis. It is first and foremost, a ministry, as much a ministry as prayer, feeding the hungry, sheltering the homeless, and any other charitable activity in Jesus’ name. One has to invite donors to join in the vision and mission and convince the donors that they will benefit both personally and spiritually by sharing a portion of their treasure. It should be a true blessing and done with integrity.

In this context of ministry, fundraising is fundraising as part of ministry: a ministry of caring, for the children who need the help and thereby fulfilling Christ’s mandate, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt: 25:40). Do not forget that the giver also gets benefits by giving and by facilitating giving to others. The word of God supports this in these verses “If you give to the poor, your needs will be supplied! But a curse upon those who close their eyes to

poverty” (Prov: 28:27 TLB), and, “Give, and you will receive (Luke: 6:38). Your gift will return to you in full—pressed down, shaken together to make room for more, running over, and poured into your lap. The amount you give will determine the amount you get back” (Luke: 6: 38 NLT). Even secular research has borne out this biblical promise. Spiritual leader Saint Francis of Assisi said, “For it is in giving that we receive.” “You can always give without loving but you can never love without giving” said Amy Carmichael, the pioneer missionary to India.

### **The Many Faces of Fundraising**

Bible stories provide great insight into the principles of fundraising. One of the best examples is found in 1 Chronicles 29: 1-17 in which David outlines his donations to the building of the temple because “this grand structure is not for man but for the Lord God.”

In today’s world the church member wants to be treated as a donor; they do not want their generosity taken for granted. Trust has to be earned through accountability, transparency, and good stewardship. Donors want to be informed, want to be asked, and want to know what their offerings and donations are accomplishing. They also want to be acknowledged for their giving. According to Dr. William Enright, Director of the Lake Institute for Faith and Philanthropy, “giving to religious institutions has fallen roughly to half in 1995 and by 2004 giving to religious acts fell to an average of 30 percent” (Directory- Dr. William Enright). Some denominations even experienced a 50% drop in per-household giving. This is may be due to recession, improper response, or mishandling of money by the organizations and churches.

For some, fundraising is only for secular organizations and not needed for Christians or missions. But the Bible clearly counsels the church and its member to be facilitators of the giving process. While appreciating the Corinthian church for their faith, knowledge, and enthusiasm, Paul urges the church to excel in the gracious act of giving so that other churches may be blessed (2 Cor. 8:7, 8). Also, for Paul, giving builds up life and gives an inheritance of the sanctified, and he quotes Jesus' words by saying "it is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts: 20: 32-35, KJV).

Research has verified what many have believed or sensed; those who give to religious causes are more likely to give to other causes as well. Even if one were to ignore the fact that "it is more blessed to give than to receive," it is hard sometimes because many Christians believe that they are a select people, but when it comes to habits of the heart, they are not. Still, many give for various reasons and motivations. Researchers Schervish and Havens have explained the reasons for generosity, which are to participate in the community and to identify with a cause. "Many do not give because they are not invited to participate, also an assurance of positive outcomes, Missional needs are not explained."<sup>27</sup>

At the same time, many do not give because they may not see the need; they may have other interests besides the cause at hand, or they may feel disenfranchised. Therefore, fundraising can be a joyful ministry in which people are brought together and work together towards a common goal.

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<sup>27</sup> Lindale E. Wesley. Principles of Fundraising: Theory and Practice. Burlington: Jones & Bartlett Publishers, 2011

## **Principles of Fundraising**

Often many hesitate to use the word *fundraising* as they face abuses and are rejected, especially by the clergy, but fundraising is a noble act. It is not about the money; it is about what happens when the money is acquired. As one emphasizes the need for money, one needs to focus clearly enough on *why it is* needed, on the good that will result, on the people who will be helped, and ultimately the blessings of it. For Jesus said, “Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me” (Mt: 25:40). Ultimately, getting involved in and helping the ministry of God brings happiness and blessings. The support extended for the enhancement of the human mind and soul through education and the arts is equivalent to serving God.

## **Giving and Stewardship is a Ministry**

Giving is a joy-filled aspect of relationship with God, an expression of faith, and a spiritual discipline. It is said that the basic discipline for becoming a more spiritual person usually involve Bible reading, prayer, and regular worship and that the fourth one is sacrifice. There is a spiritual growth through renunciation of things that is valued.

The Bible promises that giving, especially financial giving, will be rewarded by God, “The one who sown bountifully will also reap bountifully... you will be enriched in every way for your great generosity” (2 Corinthians: 9:6,11). Such rewards need not be tangible, they may be spiritual, and usually are. Those who give of their earthly treasure experience the spiritual reward of hearts increasingly drawn into the wondrous love of God. This is the basis for spirituality and is in no way a gimmick. People who renounce their treasure as a spiritual sacrifice to God discover that they are transformed within and



drawn closer to God. To put it simply, “stewardship is the biblical path to spirituality.” The spiritual principle of renunciation is taught in the Bible, and it was consistently taught in the early church.

Preaching on giving and money is the desired duty and delight of Christians all over the world, but today, due to various reasons, it is reluctantly preached because of taint and scams in current society as many have abused Biblical principles for personal gain. Second, it is considered a private matter and is an awkward topic to discuss, but the Bible is filled with instances of giving. In the Old Testament, after Noah exits the ark, the first thing he does is build an altar and offer sacrifices to God (Gen: 8: 20). In the New Testament, there is the story of the Magi bringing their gifts to celebrate the birth of the baby Jesus (Mt: 2:12). In Jesus’ ministry a gift of devotion from a woman who pours expensive ointment on his feet and then wipes his feet with her hair (Mark: 14: 3-9) is a good example of sacrifice and giving.

Sacrifice is essential to worship. The good news of Biblical stewardship is that Christians are encouraged to give out of glad and generous hearts, motivated by sincere love for God.

Stewardship is a duty and delight as it involves faithful living, faithful giving, support, and sacrifice. The good news of Biblical stewardship is that those who live as people who belong to God experience life at its absolute best. The Bible says joyful people will be generous people, and generous people will be joyful people, for generosity leads to rejoicing (I Chronicles 29:9), and joy leads people to give generously (2Cor:8:2).

Stewardship is a joy-filled aspect of our *relationship with God*. A faithful stewardship involves giving to God as an act of worship. Giving is an act of expression of

love and devotion to the God who is so good. By doing this it is discovered that the very essence of Christianity, the heartfelt relationship with God, is renewed with joy and thanksgiving, and this replaces self-interest or guilt.

Second, faithful stewardship involves giving to God as an *expression of our faith*. By this it is confessed that everything belongs to God, and faith is in action. By doing this it is discovered that there is a practical value for faith that God the creator will redeem, sustain, rule, and provide with everything that is to be content.

Third, stewardship involves giving to God as a discipline *for spiritual growth*. This degree of renunciation and self-denial is practiced according to the spiritual principle that “for where your treasure is, there your heart will be also” (Mathew: 6:21).

### **The Role of Bangalore Churches**

The church in Bangalore has influence, opportunity, mandate, manpower, and responsibility. The Bangalore Christians are God’s children and are not only saved but commissioned to work on God’s team to reach children, for this provides long-term success in the ministry. This is seen in and around the country in the ministry of Navjeevan Seva Mandal and others in India. Reaching children through the support of Bangalore churches could help transform the troubled and needy world of children in North India.

The vision of this dissertation is to influence the churches to reach the generations to come, as children’s ministry is one of the most important ministries because children are important to God, and it multiplies in long-term success. Knowing the childhood years are the years of greatest opportunity for the Gospel, this is the time to open the doors for the gospel and to speak out to the churches in Bangalore. With the present

political scenario in India, the future looks grim, and there is no hope in current and future generations.

This dissertation is envisioned to the pastors to urge them to become part of mission. For the children themselves cannot have a voice, as they are entirely at the mercy of the goodwill of their families, church leaders, clergy, and the church.

### **Moving towards a Child-Shaped Church**

One of the biggest challenges in developing any support for children's ministry involves persuading the church community to accept this as the responsibility of the whole church. The whole church needs to be informed and support, not just leaders or clergymen. With prayers and God's grace, this message will reach as many churches as possible to introduce the ministry of Navjeevan Seva Mandal in North India and raise the needed prayer and financial support.

Pray and persuade to become a mission-shaped, children-shaped church by involving children in various ways through its traditions and liturgies, by their own worship and witness to proclaim the gospel, and by reading the epistle, answering questions, taking part in offertory, and making them visible to the adults. More than games and fun activities call children to make commitment through baptism, confirmation, or admission to Holy Communion. Persuade the church community to accept this as the responsibility of the whole church.

Without children, life and faithfulness have no meaning beyond one generation. As Neil Postman put it, "Children are the living message we send to a time we will not see."<sup>28</sup> In the same way children are the church of tomorrow and need to be addressed today with a true relationship and responsibility. Lord Jesus Christ is the God of all

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<sup>28</sup> Postman Neil. *The Disappearance of Childhood*. New York: Penguin Random House. 2011

generations, even to the churches in Bangalore, and ministry to children can raise up the next generation of Samuels, Esther's, Daniels, and Deborah's as agents of transformation to bring His loving deliverance to this world. Knocking on the doors of churches and the hearts of pastors again and again for the noble cause of reaching children with the gospel can maximize possible support for children's ministry.

### **Summary of Literature**

“Speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, for the rights of all who are destitute. Speak up and judge fairly; defend the rights of the poor and needy” .Pro. 31:8-9

Even in the mission fields of Navjeevan Seva Mandal (NSM), children are the most receptive and most effective agents for mission to evangelize their peer group. As more than 5000 children have passed out of the NSM children's home and day care centers, their impact in society is enormous and awesome, for they testify the Lord in their family, society, and community. In the churches wherever they are, they are the pillars and active member of the church. Therefore, NSM has reprioritized and re-directed its ministry toward children in North India by starting one children's home every year for boys and girls. The goal is to nurture, educate, equip, and reach their generations for Christ (Shepherd 890).

This study's goal is to maximize the transformational impact of children in North India. Furthermore, it is to confront their poverty and address the spiritual, mental, physical, relational, economic, and social issues they face and to equip a new generation to transform the generations, as 4/14 Watchword states, “transformed and always transforming.”

The number of children in India is almost equal to the next three countries, infact quite a number of children are left without care and education in the mission fields. They are the people group who provide gateways to their people, but for 8000 believers' children, there only exist three children's homes. Moreover, Missiologists point out that "They are the enormous people group and thereby, this study will help to envision the church pastors and leaders of Bangalore Churches to re-examine their priorities and strategies in the coming decade."

The poor and exploited tend to be much more receptive to the Gospel. They are the most receptive people group. In the mission fields in North India, they show much interest to Gospel, and their parents are eager to enroll them in the children's homes as there is suffering and poverty at home. Their living conditions are poor with animals and humans sleeping together. Their bedroom, living room, kitchen, and hall is a single room with everything happening under one roof, but society has forgotten them and treat them as unwanted. Bryant Myers reminds people that children are suffering, at risk, vulnerable, and still unwanted. Moreover, they are a forgotten people group as Dr. Dan Brewster said. Sadly, apparently not much is being done to reach children even though they are the future of the Church (4-14 global initiative). Therefore, Navjeevan has taken the initiative to reach many cities and churches in India to raise support for these little children so that their future is secured in the Lord and to equip them to reach their generation for Christ.

It is true that if people do not embrace Jesus Christ as their savior before they reach their teenage years, their chance of doing so at all is slim. Therefore, it is the prayer that through the support of Bangalore churches the Lord will raise up thousands of little

champions in North India to be His agents of transformation, and there would become a generation of Esthers and Daniels who bring pleasure to the Heavenly Father's heart.

Furthermore, despite the ample evidence in the Bible of fundraising as a ministry, there is a lack of understanding on fundraising and much less acceptance in churches. The pastor and the church shy away from talking about money (except the tithe and offerings). They avoid using the term *fundraising* and in fact treat fundraising like a bad word and a despised practice. That attitude is all wrong and must be put in its proper perspective. The myth about fundraising is to be dispelled. Therefore, the goal is to bring clarity to the pastors, churches, and congregations in Bangalore Churches and to pray for a divine ear, divine eye, and divine heart to see, hear, and respond to the need of the children in the mission field in North India. Raising support is an invitation to fruitfulness for it touches relationships and reaches into life beyond churches, homes and individuals.

With this focus this study is carried out through the methodology and data collection. The goal is to discover the reasons for the minimal support of churches and help to change the methods of approach in order to envision this greater task of reaching the next generation for Christ.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **Introduction**

The purpose of this study was to evaluate Bangalore Churches and find solutions to increase their support for North Indian children's ministry in NSM. Goals for the study were to uncover the reasons for the minimal support of churches in Bangalore and facilitate change through encouraging church contributions and support to North Indian children's ministry.

The sampling population was comprised of churches of all denominations in Bangalore. While variation exists in their forms of worship and belief the questions placed before them were uniform.

#### **Nature and Purpose**

Reaching children is reaching future generations, and it is now a global need. Failing to reach them now means they become unreachable in the future and ultimately will be lost to Christianity. Furthermore, if this is not solved in the present generation in India, then it will become even more difficult in the future. It matters to God and so should be a priority in the ministry. Today church planting and reaching children is still practical but will become more difficult in the long term, yet it is still discouraged and disregarded now.

The purpose of this study was to evaluate and implement methods for raising support for children's ministry that are not already used in the Bangalore churches. The goal of this study is also to develop the importance of children's ministry. Methods include informing, reaching children through systematic strategies, evangelism, and

discipleship. These can reach the generations, which can achieve multiple long term impacts.

### **Research Questions**

In order to fulfill the purpose of this study, three research questions have been identified.

**Research Question #1.** What do the pastors in this study believe about children and the church's responsibility to minister to children?

The answer to this question will provide the starting point for measuring the reasons for a lack of focus on children and support to children ministry. Second, this could help pastors realize their level of responsibility and their challenges in supporting children's ministry.

**Research Question #2.** What vision do the pastors have for children's ministry and for the level of support for North Indian children's ministry?

The answer to this provides the baseline for this study. The researcher will design qualitative analysis and will expect the development in the life of participant to escalate their vision on reaching children.

**Research Question #3.** What are the strategic initiatives NSM leadership can develop to increase the pastoral and congregational care for children and encouragement to support ministry with children in North India?

Assuming the answer to question two demonstrated a positive or negative change, the final aspect of this research is determined to incorporate the methods of other organizations and encourage understanding of the fact that fundraising is a ministry.



## Ministry Context

The researcher lives and ministers in the city of Bangalore, India. Bangalore today is one of the world's thirty most dynamic places in the world and has the ability to embrace technological change, absorb rapid population growth, and strengthen global connectivity. Bangalore, along with several in the United States, head the list of the world's fastest changing cities. This is due to a combination of factors, primarily the moderate weather and the abundance of skilled labor due to the established Information Technology ecosystem. Although still far from being among the best, Bangalore has grown very quickly.

Bangalore is in the southeast of the South Indian state of Karnataka and has an average elevation of 3,020ft sea level. It also has severe air pollution around areas of traffic concentration.<sup>29</sup>

Bangalore is one of the most ethnically diverse cities in the country, with over 62% of the city's population comprising migrants from other parts of India. Historically a multicultural city, Bangalore has experienced a dramatic social and cultural change with the advent of the liberalization and expansion of information technology and business process outsourcing industries in India<sup>30</sup>.

The cultural and language make up of Christians and churches is varied in Bangalore. Christians speak Tamil, Kannada, Malayalam, Telugu, Hindi, and other languages in the churches, as do the pastors. Their ways of worship and preaching will be different but acceptable to each other. The values of honesty, trust, boldness, freedom, team spirit, modesty, and fun are exercised within the church and outside the church. In

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<sup>29</sup> <<https://bangalore geography>>

<sup>30</sup> <<https://culture of Bangalore>>

this context there is mutual respect, and cooperation with each other is reflected in the church, family, and the work place.

This city is the base for many mission organizations and has a sizable percentage of Christians and churches. The Christians widely believe in the God of the trinity, and Catholics are predominantly Mother Mary Catholics. There are many believers with roots in evangelism and a thirst for God's ministry.

### **Population and Participants**

The population of this study was pastors from Bangalore East area churches; the researcher visited them in person with prior information and asked them to complete the questionnaire, survey, or interview. The number of participants were thirty, and they were chosen because they pastor in the Bangalore East region.

A large number of authors have written on the appropriate sample size for a project like this. Irving Seidman speaks of the need for sufficiency and saturation in determining sample size. Following his approach, two questions need to be satisfied:

1. Are the numbers sufficient to reflect the range of participants that make up the population? 2. Have you reached the point where you are hearing the same information reported?<sup>31</sup>

### **Design of Study**

#### **Instrumentation**

This is a pre-post non-experimental study in the descriptive mode that utilized a researcher-designed questionnaire. The participants provided written answers for the given questionnaire.

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<sup>31</sup>Seidman, Irving. *Interviewing as Qualitative Research: A Guide for research in Education and the Social Sciences*. New York: Teachers College, 1998.

**Criteria for Selection**

The criteria for selection is simply that participants must be in the ministry as pastors or involved or involved in their church activities for few years with roles as leaders and decision-makers. Their faith in Christianity and Christ also matters, for only Christians can provide the right response to the survey for best results. The selected people would be either familiar to the researcher or to members of the mission efforts that are happening in India. The people with the knowledge of mission and children ministry would be given priority for they understand the purpose beyond this study.

**Description of Participants**

Participants are both male and female who are in the ministry as pastors designate or as lay leaders of the church who make decisions in supporting and executing the ministry within and outside the church. Mostly they must belong to Tamil speaking ethnicity, and there are a few Kannada and Malayalam speaking people. Their vocation primarily is ministry, and if they are lay leaders then their job would be in business, though for female participants it would be mostly in education involved in teaching in Christian schools. Their education level is at least graduate, and their years of practicing Christianity would be more than thirty years.

**Pilot Test**

For the pilot test, the researcher administered the questionnaire to three people from the CSI Bethel Church, one pastor and two associate pastors, where he regularly worships on Sunday. He waited one week and administered the same questionnaire again. By completing this test, he ensured that the questions were well-written and that participants understood what being asked. The average score for the first test was twenty-

five and the average score for the second test was twenty-nine. The difference and increase in the average score is four. This deviation falls within the acceptable range of deviation. After the completion of second test, the researcher asked the participants if any question was confusing or could be improved on. All of the participants said it did not need to change as it was understandable.

The interview form was also understandable and answered without any confusion.

### **Reliability and Validity**

In the researcher's opinion, the given survey and inventories are reliable most of the time and to some extent may be fallible information given the bias towards the questionnaire. By interviewing the pastors and ministry-oriented people, it is understood that the tools for research were validated.

The traditional concepts of reliability and validity of research do not always hold within qualitative research (Wiersma and Jurs 215). Qualitative research occurs in the natural setting, rendering study duplication difficult.

Reliability and validity requirements mandate researchers compare and contrast observations by means of triangulation (Clarke 193). Triangulation has many forms, but it basically features combinations of two or more different research strategies in the study of the same empirical units (Denzin 308)

### **Data Collection**

After prior permission was granted, participants received or were given a packet of information, which included a questionnaire. They were asked to fill in the questionnaire within one week.

To maintain confidentiality, participants did not put their names on the questionnaires. Instead they mentioned their church and the last three digits of their mobile number.

The questionnaire asked for information about age, gender, place of ministry, educational level, experience in ministry, and other intervening variables, so that these items could be taken into account in the results of the study.

For data collection, the researcher employed interviews, observation, and questionnaire responses.

This was an experimental study in the descriptive mode that utilized a researcher-designed questionnaire. The tabulation of the surveys provided an indication of the participants' level of interest in the children's ministry.

The main method of data collection was a semi-structured, open-ended telephone interview, and direct interviews with seven pastors on the condition of confidentiality. Robert A. Emmons observes that an open-ended interview method holds wider applicability in the assessment of spirituality and religiousness than a rigid interrogation by providing window into the person's thinking process (Robert 97).

### **Data Analysis**

The researcher's observation was the seven interviews and twenty-three question-answer examination type of analysis. He did not do video or audio recording as it may have been distracting in this context. After compiling the results, he contrasted and compared to produce the results. The data was summarized with frequency distributions and descriptive statistics. The analysis included not only the quantitative information but also the brief qualitative information, that is, the written answers required by some of the

questions. Participants' observations and their feedback columns at the end were also taken into consideration.

### **Ethical Considerations**

This study was limited to pastors of Bangalore East Churches. They participated in the program as senior and associate pastors. Prior to the interview and questionnaire, a survey consent form was given to them and confidentiality will be maintained. The design of this study is authentic, trustworthy, credible, and confirmable, based on the observations and data collection. Further, because only the last three digits of mobile numbers are written in the form, no one knows who completed the survey. The unique characteristic of these pastors is that they cannot be generalized as to their church background and experiences.

All the questions were received back in a sealed envelope, and the researcher worked with the data as it appeared in the papers. When the dissertation gets approved and completed, all hard copies will be destroyed. The writer also worked with electronic data, and that is saved in three places: computer, laptop, and pen drive with password protection. Once the approval is given for this dissertation, all the electronic copies will be destroyed.

### **Review of the Chapter**

In this chapter the nature and purpose of this study is described with the three research questions. Ministry context is provided for a basic understanding of participants and analysis. A description of sample participation is included as well as a few lines on criteria for selection, description of participants, and ethical considerations.

The pilot test was described along with the procedures, methods of data collection, and data analysis with the reliability and validity of the project being highlighted.

Findings of the study are summarized in Chapter 4, which presents the findings, and a discussion about the results is included in Chapter 5.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **FINDINGS**

#### **Introduction**

This chapter deals with the data and evidence gathered during the research study. It begins with an introduction and also includes a detailed overview of the participants involved in the study and their responses to the research questions mentioned in Chapter 3. Finally, the results are analyzed and reported along with major findings.

Ministering to children is challenging in today's culture and especially in the Indian political, religious scenario. Today's culture fosters an atmosphere that encourages churches to be busier than ever in programming. The churches in Bangalore have more options for varied distractions than previous generations, with sports, music, and entertainment. All of these distractions are the influence of the marketing industry. The model is not Biblical but much influenced by worldliness and consumerism. In order to present a well-rounded ministry, the church should realize the importance of children's ministry in the present context. Adult churches should provide financial support to reach the unreached children in the North India mission field, similar to the pattern of the first century Jerusalem church supporting the ministry of grooming churches.

The Church should do more for reaching children beyond its boundaries. In fact, Jesus often chose to work with and through children, even though it was not the practice of his time. Children were important only as much as they contributed to the family livelihood through their work in the field or trade. Otherwise, they were neither to be seen nor heard. Thereby his followers were acting in the normal way for the time when they refused to allow children to come near Jesus. To their surprise Jesus welcomed the

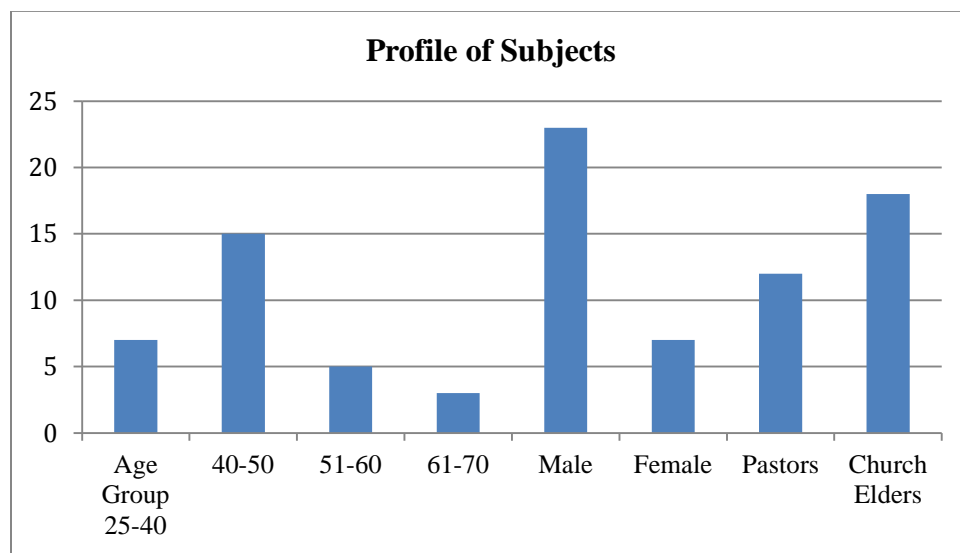


children into his presence and blessed them (Mark: 10:13-16). Thus, Jesus taught them the importance of reaching children with God’s love and gospel without regard to culture or boundaries.

The purpose of this study was “to maximize support for children’s ministry by providing a vision for children’s significance to churches in Bangalore.” An eight-question instrument was administered to thirty people through phone calls, emails, and in person (See Appendix A).

Men dominated the questionnaire and the focus group, for men are 78% of the community and women are 22%. Among the participants, twelve were pastors from different denominations, and eighteen were church elders who are loaded with responsibilities and actively involved in church activities. The participants attend church regularly, and they know the significance of children’s ministry in North India. Moreover, the participants had a wide range of experience as it is related to the church and children’s ministry.

**Table 1: Profile of Subjects**

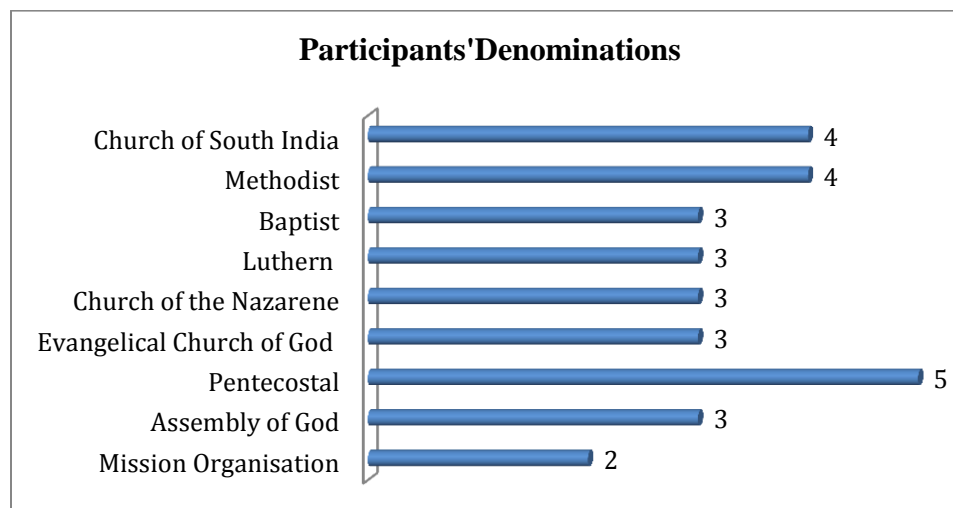


The researcher interviewed twenty pastors and church elders for this study; six participant responses were collected from emails and the four in phone calls. The program participants are from various denominations, churches, and age groups. The median age of the participants' involved in the interview and questionnaire was forty years, where the oldest was sixty-seven, and the youngest was twenty-nine.

The spiritual formation profile for participants is as follows. They are the people who witness the Lord daily in their spiritual lives, they are spiritual leaders in their churches and community; they experience the fear of the Lord with submission to God's will and authority; they yield spiritual fruits in line with the spiritual disciplines of prayer and Bible reading, and they are consistent in worship, church attendance and are freed from any addiction.

Moreover, they are pastors, leaders, and church elders representing eight denominations and two mission organizations. Their understandings of Christ and children's ministry are matured and molded in integrity, responsibility, and concern.

Of the thirty pastors and church elders interviewed for this qualitative study, seven were between the ages of twenty-five and forty. They are involved in the children's ministry in various capacities as Sunday school teachers. Fifteen pastors range in age from forty to fifty years old. There are both male and female participants who are active in the ministries. Five people were from positions that control the money within the family and in church. Three were elders of the church who are above sixty years of age.

**Table 2: Participants' Denominations**

The above mentioned are the leading denominations in the city, especially in eastern Bangalore. The highest number of subjects are from Pentecostal churches, for there are a vast number of Pentecostal churches in the city, and they are still growing. Second, Methodist and Church of South India both had four subjects. They have a good number of churches with influence and finance.

The Assembly of God church, Church of the Nazarene, Evangelical Church of India, Lutheran, and Baptist each has an equally number of subjects participate, plus the two mission agency leaders.

### **Instrumentation**

A questionnaire containing eight questions with sub-questions was the instrument used to collect data for this research project. The first question relates to the profile of the subjects and their ministerial strengths. The second, third, and fourth questions measured the participants' level of cognitive competence as it relates to their perceived abilities in children's ministry.

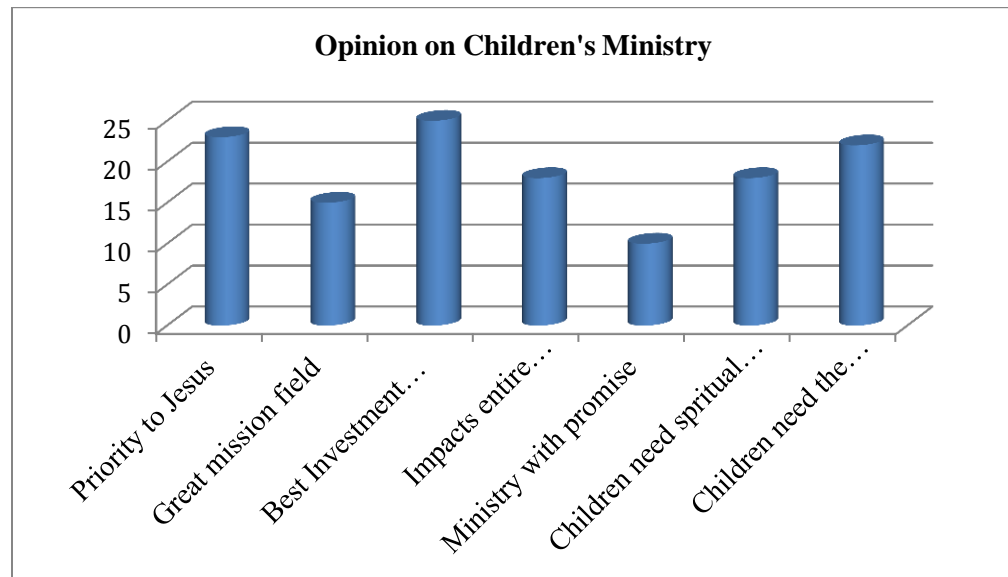
The fifth and sixth questions measure the subjects' opinion on their churches' support of child sponsorship, and the seventh and eighth questions reveal the participants' understanding on fund raising and its challenges for children ministry.

Participants used a five-point Likert scale to rate two questions that related to child sponsorship and their role in children ministry. Given the small number of participants, the small essay statements enabled the researcher to see more clearly the importance of children ministry, as well as reasons and suggestions for fund raising in the Navjeevan Seva Mandal child care ministry.

The method for assigning numerical values to the essays was as follows. Copies of the questionnaire were distributed to the pastors and church elders, both male and female. These focused on the individual and churches' grasp of children's ministry and support of the North Indian children's ministry. The researcher also counted the number of words used in the essay answers. A long answer does not necessarily mean a better answer; however, it does imply a participant's thoughtfulness and forethought towards a particular topic.

## Response Data

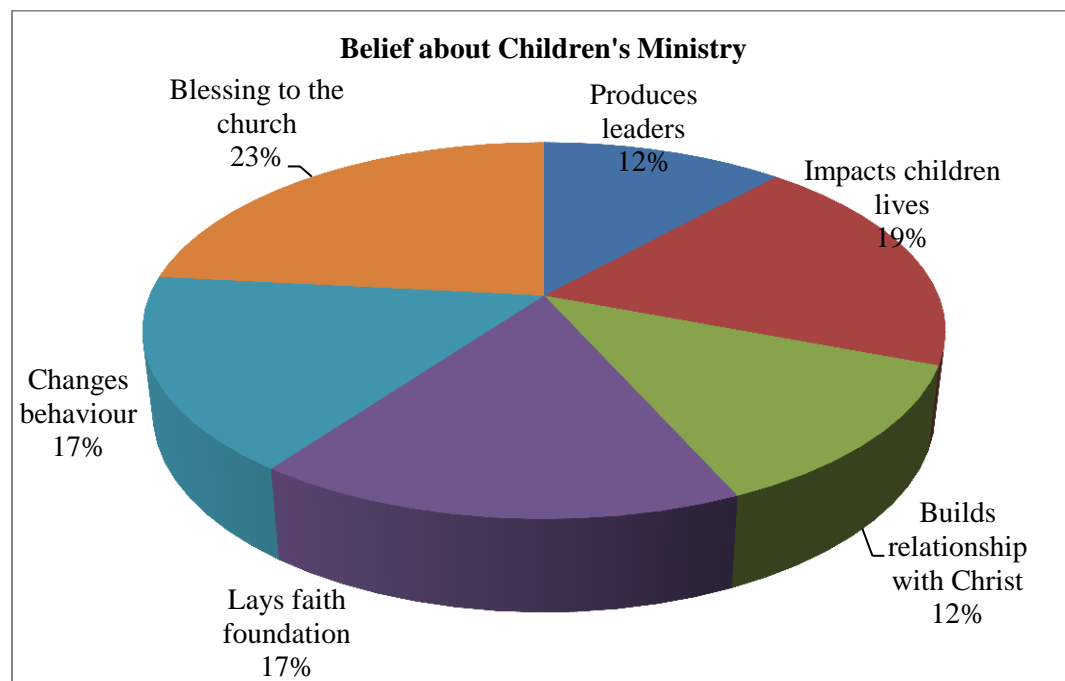
**Table 3: Pastors' Opinion on Children's Ministry**



The subjects' attitude on children's ministry varied but to some extent carried the same values in their understanding. "Best Investment" got the top score among nine categories, for they know this ministry is the best investment to reach the next generation with the gospel in India. Second, they said that children's ministry was a priority for Jesus.

The subjects understand the importance of the soul and emphasized the need of "Savior to the children in their prime age through evangelism." According to R.V. Pierard, "Evangelism shapes the nation's values, civil religion and provides the vision for the nation. Moreover, unbelief, social evil would be purged to create a righteous public."<sup>32</sup>

<sup>32</sup>Pierard V. Richard. *Evangelical Perspectives*. Philadelphia: Lippincott, 1970

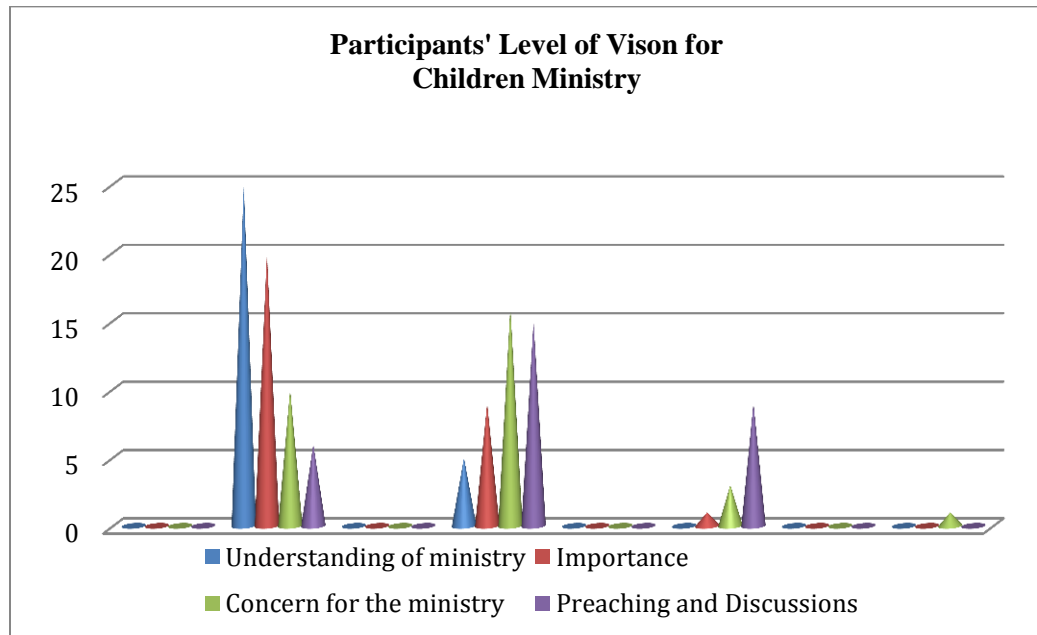
**Table 4: Participants' Belief about Children's Ministry**

The purpose of children's ministry is to bring them to a saving faith in Jesus Christ, to train them for a life of discipleship, and to equip them for Christian service in the world today. In essence, the goal is to help children to think as a Christian, make significant decisions using a Christian perspective, and to impact society with the message.

It is said that children's ministry is a good field to catch the world for Christ. Therefore, even today children's ministry is valued because of its impact on the family and society as a whole. This research demonstrated that most of the pastors and elders come to the conclusion that it brings blessings to the church; moreover, God's kingdom is extended. Second, it impacts children lives for the short-term and longer-term as is seen in the mission fields of FMPB, IMS, NSM& others. A full 81% identified the fact that children's ministry lays a faith foundation and changes behavior.

Finally, about fifteen participants recognized the fact that it builds a relationship with God and produces leaders. These factors produce healthy churches that increasingly reflect the character of God.

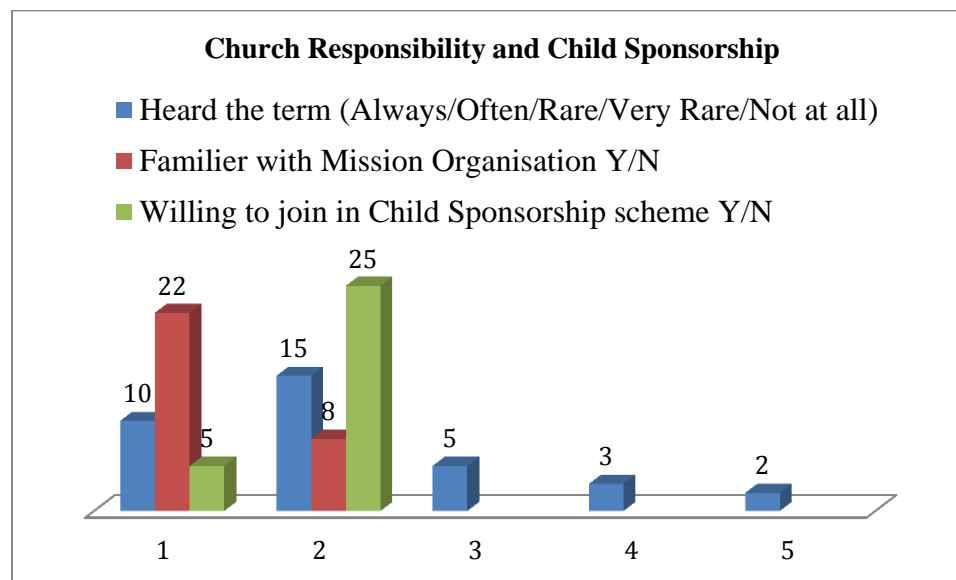
**Table 5: Participants' Level of Vision for Children Ministry**



The understanding of children’s ministry differs from person to person, but all the subjects know about ministry to children. One pastor said, “Children’s ministry is helpful only in churches but not outside the church, for it is not fruit yielding.” He meant that he only supports his church and is not willing to take the extra mile to extend ministry to the unreached. Otherwise, everyone said that children’s ministry is an important factor in reaching the country with the Gospel. Of thirty subjects, twenty declared that children’s ministry is very important in the present scenario, and nine thought it was important. Whereas only one mentioned it as not important, saying “I consider adults as the decision makers and their souls as more important than children.”

Twenty-five participants claim that they have concern for children as it brings social and spiritual transformation. However, they are reluctant to support this financially as their personal agendas take precedence over the children ministry.

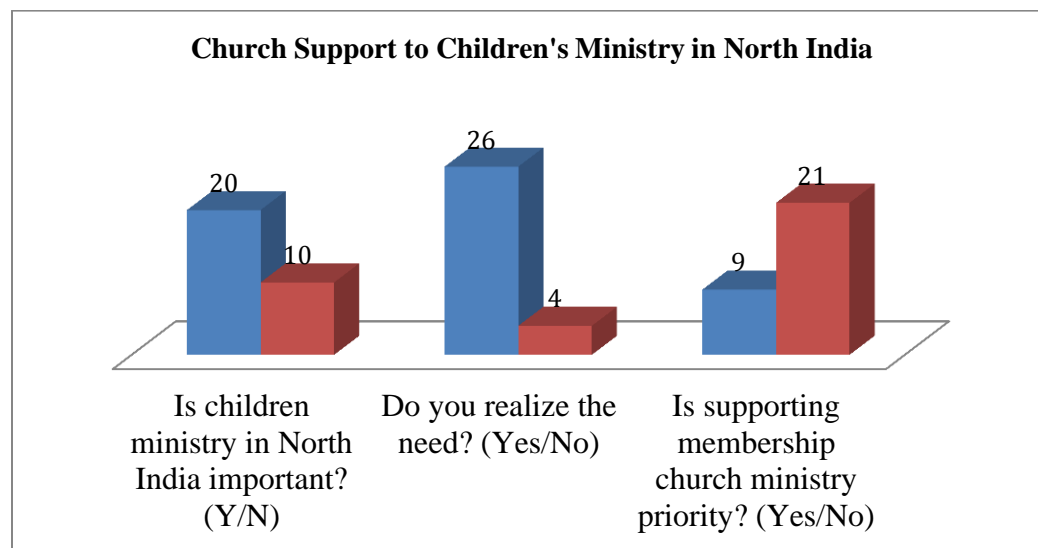
**Table 6: Church Responsibility and Child Sponsorship**



The review of the data on Child Sponsorship illustrates that fifteen have heard the term very often, and ten of them declared that the term is always heard in preaching, reading, and church involvement.

On the other side, a majority of twenty-two are familiar with mission organizations working in the mission field among children in North India.



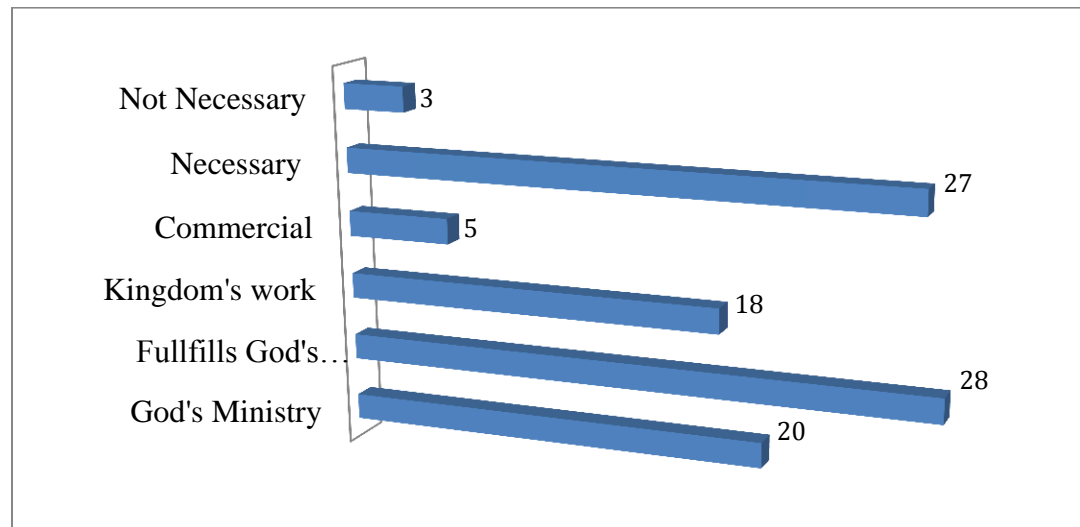
**Table7: Level of Church Support to Children’s Ministry in North India**

Most of the participants know the importance of children’s ministry within their church and outside. Also, they realize the need of support and the importance of reaching children in north India, as millions there do not have nutritious food, a hygienic life, education, or salvation. A grooming pastor gave the following reason for his minimal support saying, “Children ministry is important because everyone needs Jesus, but ministry to all the age group is equally important. Many a times some ministry concentrate only to children, but when children accept Jesus as savior, this children have no choice but to listen to their parents because they are 100% dependent to parents, thus it is not important and doesn’t feel giving.” Further, for him, children’s ministry is very helpful in churches, but outside of the church it is waste of time and money.

In this case reaching the unreached with an opportunity to receive Christ in their privileged life becomes a hindrance. Jesus died for all humanity, not for a few, and those who become believers must grow to maturity. The responsibility to encourage that growth has been placed on the shoulders of the church’s appointed leaders, but they are not implementing this due to various factors in the church. A few respondents believed

that if children's ministry is meant for people of other faith, then they are not willing to partner with missions, but they will support them if their work is only for Christians and believers' children. For them, ministry to outsider is considered as not in the plan of God, forgetting the truth that, God said to "preach and reach all the communities all over the world."

**Table 8. Initiatives of NSM Leadership and the Idea of Fundraising for Children**

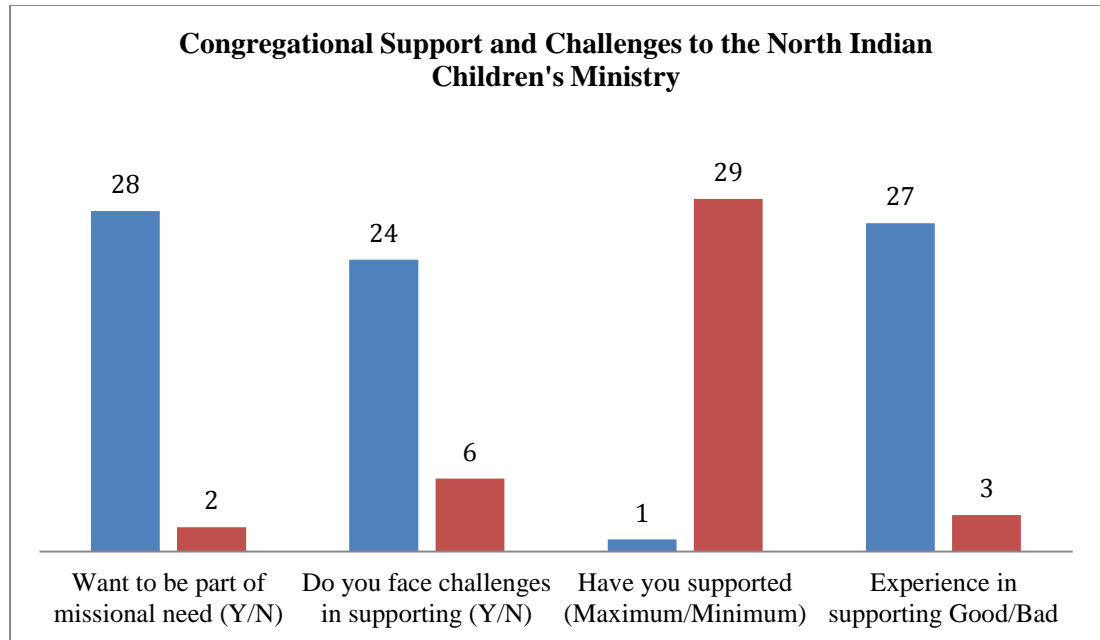


Of the all participants, twenty of them recognized fundraising ministry as God's ministry. One participant went one step further and said that from beginning to end fundraising is ministry, and it should be grounded in prayer and undertaken in gratitude. It touches relationships and reaches into the inner life beyond one's home. For the others it is an opportunity to put their resources at the disposal of God's Kingdom.

On the contrary, five of the participants declared it as commercial, which may be because of unaccountability, non-transparency, a bad experience with the mission organizations, and also due to the luxurious life of mission leaders who receive money from others in the name of mission but don't walk the talk. An elderly lady said

fundraising is an American Term used for collecting money. She did work in a mission school where the school was supported through fundraising of American churches and missions.

**Table 9. Congregational Support and Challenges to North India Children’s Ministry**



Almost all the respondents responded by saying that they want to be part of missional need, but that there are challenges to supporting ministry. Moreover, through the focus group and questionnaire, the researcher come to the understanding that pastors and church elders do not show much interest in supporting mission field children, for they feel that there is so much to do in their church itself that what they are doing for children is good enough to the church and are not bothered with mission field children.

In a growing church, the pastor answered saying, “we are already doing children ministry in our church, not in terms of sponsoring but teaching, equipping them for a holistic life,” but he forgot the truth that reaching the millions of unreached children who

remain untouched by Christ is important. The researcher believes that being satisfied with one church or one hundred children is not the vision of Christ.

### **Summary of Significant Findings**

1. Personal agendas of church leaders take precedence over Biblically supported ministry.
2. A gap exists between what church leaders say they value and what actually happens in church regarding children's ministry.
3. Church's budgets do not reflect a value of children or children's ministry, often because of the practice of giving the money directly to the pastor.
4. Training could empower churches with knowledge of the current state of children in Northern India, as well as tools to raise funds.

### **Conclusion**

The participants, after completion of the focus group and questionnaire, felt the need for children's ministry in North India. They said an encouraging word that they will reach out to their churches' boards and committees to emphasize the need for supporting the children's ministry in North India and will start supporting them in the following months.

According to Mark Dever, "An important mark of a healthy church is having biblical leadership and growth. Growth is for missions and evangelism, with senior members letting their responsibility to younger generation to increase sacrificial giving, to increase prayers for opportunities gives growth."<sup>33</sup> Now churches are the places where only the pastor's thoughts are taught, where God is questioned more than he is worshiped, where the gospel is diluted and evangelism deviated, where church

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<sup>33</sup>Dever Mark. *Nine Marks of a Healthy Church*. Illinois: Crossway. 2013

membership is made meaningless, and where a worldly cult of personality is allowed to grow up around the pastor. In this case, one can hardly expect to find a community that is either unified or edifying for missional accountability. Such a church will not glorify God.

It is the time to pray and work for promoting evangelism through children's ministry by giving and prayer, which is the mark of a healthy church. Only then the church will come forward to understand the need to support the North Indian children's ministry.

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **DISCUSSION**

#### **Introduction**

Lord Jesus commissioned his church to preach the gospel to everyone (Mt:28:19). Children's ministry supports this mission in several ways. If children are reached in God's love, with care and acceptance their parents can also be reached. In fact, families in the community are often willing to attend a church that will serve their children's needs; if not, the family does not come to the church. Herb Miller said, "the church and Christians need to help other Christians grow and this is one reason Christ founded the church." Consequently, children's ministry helps church growth by making it easier for new people to attend services and fosters church growth through the evangelization of parents.

Therefore, today church leaders should have a vision for a longer goal towards the future church, beyond the day-to-day operations and beyond the immediate horizons. Pastors as leaders should envision the achievement of objectives never dreamed of by others. George Bernard Shaw said, 'You see things; and you say 'Why?' But I dream of things that never were, and I say, 'Why not?.' To reach the unreached children the church needs the leaders who have dreams, and the inspirers who share those dreams with others. (J.E. Means, Leadership in Christian Ministry).

The blessed church within cities has to implement the sacrificial giving methods of Western countries to get involved in the mission of God with vision and an unconditional love towards unreached North Indian poor and needy children. In contradiction, however, in many ways congregations fail to understand the significance

of children's ministry to the church. To overcome this, churches need to view themselves in a different way; one way is to see children as "mini-adults," and childhood simply a preface to adulthood. The second way is to see children as "raw material" who will become adult Christian believers. Third, children can be seen as an "unsaved" group of people who are in need of rescue from their own sinfulness and from an evil world.

Dr. R. Stanly, the great Evangelist in India says that today Christian ministers are in a big trap to reach Christians only. According to him, the greatest sin of the century is "we preach to the preached, bless the blessed, convert the converted, baptize the baptized, comfort the comforted but neglect the neglected."<sup>34</sup> Moreover, in India 90% of the Christian programs have Christians in mind, and according to Barret, the great mission researcher, 95% of Christian money is spent on Christians. This order and trend must change. Christians are only spending time with other Christians, but they need to get into the spirit of reaching where Christ is not known. This is the greatest concern today. Christians need to go out of Antioch, where there is need, and let every church say that it will not build on another man's foundation but rather will reach where Christ is not known.

Thus, the problem is that Bangalore churches overlook reaching out to the North Indian children as mission but instead minister again and again only to other Christians. The purpose of this study is to create a sense of missional responsibility among Bangalore churches to reach the unreached children for Christ.

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<sup>34</sup> Protestant Reformation Conference – Preaching by Dr. R. Stanley, Campus Crusade, Bangalore

## **Major Findings**

The major findings of this study were evaluated through three lenses: 1. The literature received in Chapter Two; 2. The biblical/theological foundation established in chapters One and Two, and 3. Data gathered from the research, especially responses to the questionnaire results.

The major findings of this study with the intent to maximize churches' support to North Indian children's ministry are presented under four headings.

1. Personal agendas of church leaders take precedence over Biblically supported ministry.
2. A gap exists between what church leaders say and value and the actual practices in church regarding children's ministry.
3. Church's budgets do not reflect a value of children or children's ministry, often because of the practice of giving the money directly to the pastor.
4. Training could empower churches with knowledge of the current state of children in Northern India, as well as tools to raise funds.

These findings are valuable and could prove useful to others who might wish to raise funds for their ministry in the future.

### **Finding 1**

Personal agendas of church leaders take precedence over Biblically supported ministry.

The Bible teaches that children are a blessing from God. In Genesis 12:1-3 God considered children as one of his greatest blessings that show great value. While Jesus was on earth He affirmed the value of children and that they matter to God. God



prioritizes them for theirs is the kingdom of God, and they are created in His own image. Personal agendas hinder children's ministry. Some people think of childhood as the golden age of innocence, a time to play with nothing to worry about. This is not true; children experience fears, anxieties, embarrassments, self-doubts, shame, resentments, and other inner turmoil. Their soul is to be valued and honored all the more, and above all they need the Savior.

In the Biblical consideration children are given precedence. In the Old Testament and Jewish world they are considered a divine gift and a sign of God's blessing, and their love and care is given priority. While rejecting harsh practices towards them, parents and churches leaders pass their biblical practices to them; their personal agendas are laid behind. In such cases, the church that concentrates on children ministry grows well and lays the foundation for the future sustainability of faith.

Moreover, through the focus group and questionnaire, the researcher understood that pastors and church elders do not show much interest in supporting mission field children; for they feel that there is so much to do in their own church. What they are doing for children within their church is good enough, and they are not bothered with mission field children.

The study reveals that 70% of the pastors are setting self-goals that are not kingdom-oriented, and the researcher has also personally observed these practices. Ministerial needs are not highlighted in the church, and the pastors live in selfishness. Often pastors do not encourage congregations to give nor contribute to missions but collect their tithes without fail by threatening laity with God's punishment. Moreover, they utilize the tithe for their own family and self- development. Pastors are often not

willing to have open discussions on money and offering. There is a practice that in the name of mission, pastors receive offerings, but the funds do not actually support ministry. There is a notion that offerings given at the church are for the pastor alone, and it is the blessings of God, which cannot be shared. All that matters to the church is worshiping God and maintaining the same number of believers; they are not willing to take others along with them, which means personal agendas takes precedence over Biblically supported ministry.

### **Finding 2**

There is a gap that exists between what church leaders say and value and the actual practices in church regarding children's ministry.

The Child Evangelism Movement emphasizes that "the children are parishioners and the future of leaders of church who represent Christ to this world and to their society" (Child Evangelism Movement). Journalist Katherine Stewart in her book *The Good New Club* criticized various practices of children's ministry by saying that children are too young to read or understand for themselves or to make an informed, independent decision about what religion they belong to. The critics question the altar calls used by preachers. Likewise, theologian Randal Rouser has also criticized the practice of "conversionism," which emphasizes immediate change in religion, rather than a gradual transformation of life and belief. Furthermore, he criticized the targeting of young children, who can be easily influenced into confessing belief in things they do not understand in order to please adults (Child Evangelism Movement).

These practices also exist in Bangalore churches. Everyone believes in the declaration "reaching children is to reach the next generation for His kingdom," but there

is a gap between the sayings of church leaders and their practices. More than 90% of the participants affirmed that children's ministry builds relationship with Christ and lays the faith foundation in their lives, but less than 30% give to the children ministry. This is a broad gap.

Theologically speaking, Christ himself expressed that children will become leaders, and leaders must to be like children in their character (Matthew 18: 2-4). Surely ministering to children produces future leaders. In every church there is concern for children's ministry, even to the North Indian children, but there is a reluctance to support it besides knowing the fact of their social and spiritual transformation. In God's kingdom action and words should go together.

### **Finding 3**

Church budgets do not reflect a value of children or children's ministry, often because of the practice of giving the money directly to the pastor.

Pastors and lay leaders see the need of children ministry across the nation but are satisfied with their present ministry within the church. They feel the church cannot directly involve North Indian children in their ministry since they are not equipped to reach out. Pastors and elders of the church do not encourage cooperation with the outreach efforts of the church.

The church is neither willing to take responsibility for mission work, nor wants to extend its support to other missions through their giving, for they consider it as not their ministry.

The eldest participant of the questionnaire claimed that, "children's ministry is important because everyone needs Jesus," but this noble ministry is not valued and

thereby is not reflected in the churches' budgets. Money goes to the pastor, to his family, and to personal expenses, and in many cases, 50% of the churches do not have accountability to the congregation. This pattern is quite common and accepted in Bangalore.

In addition, many church budgets do not reflect provision for children's ministry because people believe it is a waste of energy. Even though children accept Jesus as savior, one day they will have no choice but to listen to their parents because they are 100% dependent on them, thus funding children's ministry is not a priority. One pastor said, "Children's ministry is very helpful in churches, but not outside of the church for it is waste of time and money."

According to Pastor Bill Hybels "we are created to join God on a mission but Christ body often find itself with a hierarchical bent and because of self-centeredness a pastor could not carry the vital roles for the advancement of the gospel."<sup>35</sup> One participant responded in this way, "In our growing church we are already doing children ministry, not in terms of sponsoring but by teaching, equipping them for a holistic life" (Participant – Assembly of God Church). He was not convinced that they were called to reach millions of children who had not been introduced to Christ, but being satisfied with one church or one hundred children is not the vision of Christ. Enjoying the blessings of God is increasing, but due to their reluctance in sharing with others, support for children's ministry does not appear in the budget.

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<sup>35</sup><https://www.sermoncentral.com/pastors-preaching-articles/bill-hybels-do-you-have-a-white-hot-vision>.

#### **Findings 4**

Training could empower churches with knowledge of the current state of children in Northern Indian, as well as with tools to raise funds.

A full 50% of the participants knew the importance of child sponsorship, but training is needed to empower churches and individuals.

One way to impact people is let the children who have benefitted from people's generosity talk about child sponsorship. This kind of personal approach is effective yet practiced infrequently. Explaining the current status of children and the importance of reaching them will reap the harvest. Certainly, children's ministry extends God's kingdom by fulfilling God's Great commission and the Great Commandment. Research by George Barna and the Barna Institute declared that, "the probability of people accepting Jesus Christ as their Saviour for a lifetime relationship during the childhood is 32%."<sup>36</sup> Thus, through children's ministry millions of children have received salvation with love, and it is not a futile effort. The tools can be mobilizing promotional meetings, arranging field visits, being accountable and transparent, and providing good experiences to the support staff with a good approach and faithfulness.

One essential piece of training is prayers; people need to pray for God's compassion to fill their hearts and the pastors' hearts and minds so that they will listen and increase their support.

#### **Ministry Implications of the Findings**

1. Conducting this research heightened people's awareness of children's conditions and the need for reaching out beyond the church walls to support children.

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<sup>36</sup> <https://www.whitehutchinson.com/religiousfacilities/childrenministry.shtml>

2. People's interest in training can lead to equipping sessions that empower churches to make a difference in children's lives.

3. At the very least, people see the inconsistency between what they believe about children and what they are doing for children.

The large number of respondents who felt it necessary to support children's ministry and were able to articulate the need for reaching the next generation in North India is very important. Opposition is severe, and anti-Christian movements are increasing.

After the meeting and explanation participants improved their knowledge of children's ministry to a greater degree than what they realized. The elders and church pastors claimed that pastors were less aware of the need of ministry. Now they have taken the needs of children ministry to their boards, churches, and congregations for better participation. On the other hand some pastors did not have time to think about and articulate why the church should provide special support to children in the mission field. This shows the inconsistency of belief and actions on children's ministry.

It is certain that the fruit of ministry will be increased; this pre-intervention study could benefit Christian's leaders and organizations. The findings are valued and could prove useful to others who might wish to raise funds for their children ministry. The participation in supporting children ministry will hopefully improve significantly and will lead to even greater opportunities for mission in future.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There are a number of limitations for this study. First, only thirty participants were interviewed out of the many number of pastors and churches in the east part of Bangalore.

A second limitation pertained to methodology. Telephone interviews were a disadvantage to the respondent, reading the questionnaire over the phone to three respondents using audio recording made the respondents nervous. Another disadvantage of telephone interview is the amount of nonverbal communication that can be lost in the exchange.

Another problem with the methodology was with the interview questions. Certain respondents did not understand the question and had to be prompted at times. Tone and word use could manipulate the respondents to answer in a specific way. The respondents for this study were gathered using convenience sampling. The pastors graciously made contact with their church leaders and committee members, and this convenience sampling also has the potential to twist the results for the good of their church.

### **Unexpected Observations**

A surprise insight the researcher gained from this research was that pastors and churches were happy with the small amount of ministry carried out in their churches. They have forgotten God's commission to preach the Gospel all over, beyond their church boundaries, towns, and cities at the national level.

According to Paul's teachings, churches should help and strengthen new ministries. While enjoying the benefit of foreign missions, five respondents believed that the North Indian children ministry had to be looked after by North Indian churches.

The present church, which enjoys the sacrificial contributions of the Methodist mission and other foreign missions to the Indian church, has forgotten their method of reaching the unreached.

Second, the carelessness of pastors and the negligence of church elders regarding the need for children's ministries in the mission field was surprising. Many independent pastors concentrate on development of self and are not bothered about the transformation/conversion of unreached children.

Another unexpected observation was treating the fundraising ministry as unbiblical. A few respondents mentioned that one should not ask for money for missions because God would provide directly, but according to Henri Nouwen, "fund raising is spiritual as giving sermon, entering a time of prayer, visiting the sick or feeding the hungry. Also, fund raising includes proclamation and invitation as well as conversion for the church growth."

Finally, pastors also have a challenge in supporting children's ministry, especially to North Indian churches, as sometime the leaders and congregation do not allow them to give away their money.

## **Recommendations**

### **Application of Study to Churches**

The findings of this study have the potential to generate support for children's ministry, which is necessary as foreign donors are shut out due to politics and religious intervention in the country. Usually, the churches cannot offer the benefits of long-term support because pastors and committee members keep changing. The more



distant the people are from mission concerns the less interest they possess for mission.

Besides, procrastination in the ministry is not in the will of God.

1. The present leaders and pastors have to provide a good atmosphere in order to create mission concern for people and generate mission funds from the offering for the children's ministry. Churches are faced with more competition than ever from the churches and society to build their churches. Also, the increase of anti-Christian movements is an alarming issue for churches and missions. Therefore, churches should feel enormous pressure to love and support the North Indian children's ministry as much as possible without fostering self-development activities or preaching only on the prosperity gospel. They need to understand that under the anti-ministry situation in India it is through children's ministry that the present and future church can be strengthened.

2. Simplify the programs to implement in mission field visits to share the faith with the unreached. At times pastors and church leaders expend large quantities of time and energy on enticing youth in their church for only music and worship or to attend certain programs sponsored by the church to ensure it is well attended. Some of these large church events have the potential of taking care of thousands of children in North India. Family life is unstable life among tribal's and the poor simply taking care of their needs and so providing gospel to them with support is an obligation of the church.

3. Appreciate ministers in the children ministry. Leaders can learn that larger quantities of time and energy spent on helping the children's ministry of the mission field will prove beneficial in the field, as well as within the Church itself, for God will bless them. The pastors who help in children's ministry commented on the ministry and on the significance of it for they are the future generation church in India.

4. Develop new approaches for the growth of children's ministry. Missions can offer opportunities to churches to see mission fields for a period of time along with some sort of spiritual director, guide, or leader. As seen in Chapter 2, churches can look to other growing churches for insight on how to support ministry effectively for a longer time.

These interviews provide hope for the possibility of maximizing churches' support of children's ministry by fostering an environment where the church members can see the vision for it through their active involvement and as volunteers. Of the thirty respondents, a higher percentage of them said that the church has more of a positive response than negative. More of the respondents enjoyed satisfaction from ministry to their own church rather than having a compelling vision for children's ministry in the mission field. Six respondents (20%) said that the most important element of their church is to contribute to their personal lives on how to live the abundant life demonstrated by other pastors, and they are not concerned with missions.

#### **Application of Study to Believers**

1. Emphasize the relationship of missions and believers in building the kingdom of God. Churches may not be able to offer the benefit of long-term support, but believers can as they make decisions for themselves. This study shows that believers and committee members play a key role in strengthening children's ministry. One respondent stated that she supports ministry and still feels that this is the need of the hour as a fractured relationship with missions will damage the church.

On this point there is one hypothesis. In comparison to the church that cannot offer a missional environment, individual believers can and do in many cases. This can be

done through house visits and special vision programs. The Bangalore churches have two major advantages over believers for supporting children's ministry. First, the mainline churches have been through the ministry, so they are saturated in the importance of children's ministry and on its impact. By contrast, one participant said that to get the support from a particular church the person has to be of same community and speaking a similar language, and it is a discouragement in the ministerial life. The church cannot simply replace the existing in-charge person with a new person every time according to the pastor's language and community.

2. Continuous effort and prayers yields the results. The churches are blessed with good amounts of income and job opportunities in a city like Bangalore. Approaching them sometime becomes more difficult, but continuous efforts will result with positive response though sometimes in vain. Moreover, influential relationships and prayer meets the need. Without providing opportunities to share about mission in the church, mere words and promises will be futile.

Christopher Lasch wrote that, "It is the logic of consumerism that undermines the values of loyalty and permanence and promotes a different set of values that is destructive of family and ministerial life." It is true in the Bangalore churches, and this could be seen in the responses of participants. To overcome this struggle in the ministry, Christians must pray for God's intervention among the pastors, church elders, and believers.

### **Suggestions for Effective Fundraising for Children's Ministry**

The churches represented in this study are immersed in their local church activities and are satisfied with their present ministries. On the other hand, they are refraining from missional obligations that God has given to the church. This study revealed the following reasons for minimizing support for children's ministry; these obstacles can be overcome.

1. Introduction in the churches. The interview, answer to questionnaires, and email and phone responses emphasized that there should be an introduction of ministry and ministerial needs in the church. This answer came up across the questionnaires for it will have an effect in the longer run. If a church recognizes a need, then individuals will accept an appeal to support the cause, especially the children's ministry. These efforts taken inside the church will yield good results. For this to happen, one has to contact the pastor and churches again and again for opportunities to share about the ministry and the word of God. Furthermore, introduction in the church and promotion in the field (houses) is always strong and helpful in the promotional ministry. It should be suggested to perceive this outreach ministry with faith and persistence.

2. Relationship with pastors. According to Henri Nouwen, "from beginning to end, fund raising is to be grounded in prayer and undertaken in gratitude." Therefore, a person in charge of the mission who represents the organization should maintain a good relationship with pastors. Moreover, relationship becomes the primary and most important thing in mobilizing funds for missions. Personal and ministry level relationships with the pastors will provide an opportunity to share the word of God along with the ministerial needs of the children's ministry. Without prayer, humbleness, and

relationships there is a much less possibility of achieving missional needs. It is important to motivate the pastors to have the children's ministry as part of their mission plan.

3. Share the impact of ministry when regional level sponsors meet. This can be conducted at various places on the vocational days to appreciate, to encourage, and to motivate the present supporters and to remind them of the huge responsibility of reaching children in India. It also provides an opportunity to listen to the experience of supporters and their expectations for better relationships. There is a need to share the importance of reaching children, which does not happen now in missions but is significant for the growth of future churches.

4. Let the vision cultural program and missionaries meet. This would encourage newcomers to pray and participate in the missions. Inviting church members and pastors to a vision cultural program will also benefit the organization as it will make them understand the peculiar situation in the mission field. Also, child witnesses and songs with cultural dances will inspire their minds, prayers, and hearts to consider the mission worthy of maximum support.

In addition, arranging a good visionary meet with child testimonies and a biblical message will increase support. There is a need to share the success stories that illustrate the impact of the mission and create more opportunities to get involved in it. The mission can use this opportunity to collect contact information for follow-up and further invitations.

5. Involve North Indian Churches. North Indian Churches should be encouraged to become actively involved in the children's ministry by providing support and leadership with vision. Churches also need to empower the ministry through prayer and

support, seeking the support of churches is right-focused and Biblical, like the Apostolic Church supported the missions of Paul.

6. Field Visit. Mobilizing individuals or small groups to visit North or South Indian NSM projects at least once in a year will boost the likelihood that they will continue to stand with mission work and provide extra support to it. Witnessing the ministry with their own eyes will inspire them to make an extra effort to meet missional needs.

7. Make introductions to get introduction. The mission efforts can mobilize new contacts through exiting contacts. This will help in the steady progress of the support for ministry, while a few efforts may be in vain, all will not be futile and certainly many will be fruitful.

8. Identify volunteers. Identifying volunteers to share about and enlarge the ministry is always help in meeting ministerial needs. Sharing the burden of the mission with one another will spread the motivation to strengthen the ongoing ministry to far and wide, including where a particular missionary cannot reach at the given time. Finding a volunteer in a year would be good enough to maximize this support.

9. Arrange to collect special offerings once a month. Churches can also give special offertory boxes to each family and collect them every three months.

10. Avail income tax exemptions. The government has given the income tax facilities under 80 G exemptions for the donors of the organization. People in churches who are eligible for this benefit must be made aware of it. Many parishioners pay tax to the government, and so this facility of income tax exemption will motivate them to donate to children's ministry.

11. Faithful follow up. One has to follow up and encourage sponsors with visits until getting the result desired. It is also important to follow up with sponsors who have dropped out or are about to.

12. Provide updated details and introduce online giving. Details of support and updates on children's progress will keep the donors on live status in their support. There is also a need to inform them about the dropout of children, and immediate replacement has to be done. Furnishing the status of the organization in a magazine also leads to continuous support for the mission. Today's technology makes it easier for donors to be appreciated.

13. Helping in need. Along with updated details of sponsored children and sponsors, organizations can extend help to supporters and donors in need; through prayer support a minister can maximize support to the mission. A minister who knows the problems of the donor and is available will harvest a lot.

14. Do not share individual problems. To the supporters, it is the ministry which is important, not the individual problems of those who bring ministerial needs. Sharing personal needs of those in the churches to the sponsors, with individuals, and to supporters is not advisable. This personal sharing will always damage the organization.

15. Watch the actions in fund raising. Availability to ministry, simplicity in lifestyle, integrity, honesty in work, and a high spirituality to guide and pray are the pillars of a minister. The ministers' loyalty to the mission and ministry gives credibility to the mission. Above all, one needs to speak positively every time about the organization and its leaders. Disloyalty to mission is considered as disloyalty to Jesus. One also needs

to be thankful to God for all blessings including appointments, opportunities, promotions, and salary.

### **Postscript**

The origin of this research project can be traced to the needs of children's ministry in North India. The researcher believed that the children's ministry would benefit from this research by informing the churches in Bangalore of the needs and importance of children's ministerial needs.

The researcher wanted the pastors and church leaders to support children's ministry regularly, part-time, or as volunteers to the mission in their churches. He believes that the findings of this study are valuable and could prove useful to others who might wish to raise funds for their children's ministry.

There are church leaders who are free from vision, are vague about church missional objectives, focus on self-development, or experience a dilution of clarity over responsibilities in leadership. These are some of the reasons for the declining support for missions today. This is a reminder to remain faithful to the vision and mission of God.

Margaret Mead said that, "Never think that a few caring people can't change the world."<sup>37</sup> The researcher believes these words; it is through the commitment and prayers of individuals and the support of churches that change will come to the next generation in India.

Working hard is good, but having a schedule will lead to growth of the mission. The researcher is always busy, and there is no guarantee of results for his hard work. However, by scheduling the work it is much more likely that there will be growth in missional support. In the IT field one has to schedule the day to have a better life. By the

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<sup>37</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/authors/top\\_10\\_margaret\\_mead\\_quotes](https://www.brainyquote.com/lists/authors/top_10_margaret_mead_quotes)



allocation and scheduling of house visits, a promotional minister (fundraiser) can increase visit up to five to ten new houses in a month as well as existing supporters. To gain more opportunities, the researcher needs a plan to visit new institutions at least once every three months. The researcher always carries a few copies of magazines, pamphlets, receipt books, and project proposals but rarely receives an opportunity to share these with people, as there is minimum contact with new people.

Second, it is certain that prayer will create opportunities. The researcher trusts that conducting fasting prayer weekly, once at home and through a half day fasting prayer with supporters, will help to him achieve the focus of this study.

The researcher has decided to follow the method of seeking God's providence and wisdom for opportunities and positive responses. Prayer changes things, and it is certain that ministry done with the above suggestions and findings can be a great tool in maximizing the support for children's ministry in North India.

Further, the researcher believes that now, with a good strategy, planned approach, and, improved communication with prayer for promotional targets, donors, sponsors and supporters, there will be results in meeting children's ministerial needs in North India.

### **Conclusion**

This study helped the researcher believe that it is possible to achieve good results from the churches in Bangalore for children's ministry. This ultimately fulfills God's commission of reaching the unreached through church growth in North India. This is helped through awareness of the ministry as well as more self-awareness. Implementing the suggestions of the respondents will definitely will bring short-term and long-term support for the ministry.

The size of the group studied was thirty people from ten denominational churches. The goal was to extract their ideas for improving the position of Bangalore churches on children's ministry. For the researcher it took twenty days altogether to get these findings through the questionnaire, interview, WhatsApp, email, and phone recordings. The questionnaire included questions about cognitive and affective matters.

Now, few people have increased their support, and a few have started support after knowing the facts and values of children ministry. This understanding matters in smaller or larger congregations.

After the explanations included as part of this study, pastors and leaders have improved their positive attitude about children's ministry, and they realize that children's ministry is not just children's ministry but is a family ministry, for it helps kids, families, church growth, and everyone in this greater mission field. Hopefully the pastors will improve significantly in this area and will provide even greater opportunities for these missions in future.

It is important to pray for local churches to implement the sacrificial giving methods of Western countries, to get involved in the mission of God with vision and an unconditional love towards unreached North Indian poor and needy children, and to maximize their support now and always in order to extend God's Kingdom. To conclude on a positive note, the mission supporters may be unknown today but eternity will reveal the impact of their ministry.

## APPENDIX A

### Questionnaire

#### 1. Personal Details

- a. Denomination of your Church:
- b. Responsibility in the Church:
- c. Age Group: 25 – 40  41 – 50  51 – 60  61 – 70
- d. Gender: Male  Female

#### 2. What do you think on Children Ministry?

- Is Priority to Jesus
- Great Mission Field
- Best Investment for generations
- Impacts entire community
- Ministry with promise
- Children need Spiritual foundation
- Children need the savior at the prime age

#### 3. Does children ministry benefit the children and the church? If so, How?

##### To the Children

- Impacts children's entire life
- It makes positive impact
- Gives personal relationship with God
- Changes children Behavior

##### To the Church

- Produces next generation of leaders
- Major growth engine for the church
- Lays a strong faith foundation for future church

#### 4. Your Personal role in children ministry?

- a. How much do you know about the importance and the benefit of Children Ministry?
  - Not known
  - Not informed

- To some extent
- Very well
- b. How important is Children ministry to you?
  - Not Important
  - Important
  - Very Important
- c. How often do you engage in children ministry?
  - Every Day
  - Once a Week
  - Once a Month
  - Not at all
- d. How often do you preach about Children and children ministry?
  - Always
  - Often
  - Seldom
  - Never

**5. Child Sponsorship**

- a. What do you feel on child sponsorship?
  - Extends God's Kingdom
  - Fulfills God's commission
  - It is a good thing to do
  - A good cause
- b. How often do you hear this term Child Sponsorship?
  - Not at all
  - Rare
  - Very Rare
  - Often
  - Very Often
- c. Do you know any organization working with children?
  - Yes
  - No

- d. What ways do you think about church being effectively involved in Child Sponsorship?
- 

**6. Church's support to the Children Ministry in North India**

- a. Is there a relationship between your Church and Children Ministry?  
Yes  No
- b. If yes, how far your church knows the importance of Children Ministry in North India?
- o Minimum
  - o Good
  - o Maximum
- c. Has your church done anything for North Indian Children Ministry?  
Yes  No

If Yes, in what ways \_\_\_\_\_

If No, why \_\_\_\_\_

**7. Fundraising Ministry**

- a. What do you understand by the term Fund Raising?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. What do you understand by the term Fund Raising?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. What is your opinion on Fund Raising for missions? It is: God's Ministry
- o Fulfills God's Mission
  - o Kingdom's Work
  - o Commercial
- d. How to envision churches on the need and significance of North Indian children ministry?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- e. What will be a motivating factor to partner with Navjeevan Seva Mandal  
\_\_\_\_\_

**8. Challenges in supporting the Children Ministry in North India:**

a. Does your church believe children ministry is in God's plan?

- Yes
- No

b. Have you supported any children ministry? Yes  No

- Do not know
- Did not approach
- Shortage of funds
- Have our own needs in the church
- Will start supporting
- Have supported

c. If you are already supporting the Children through sponsorship?

How was your experience?

- Bad
- Neither Good or Bad
- Good
- Very Good

d. Do you face any challenges in your church for supporting mission field children?

- Yes
- No

If yes, in what ways?

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## **APPENDIX B**

### **Consent Form for Questionnaire**

My name is Pethudu Muniappa, John Wesley and I am a student at Asbury Theological Seminary conducting a study for my dissertation on Envisioning Bangalore Churches on the Significance of Children Ministry in North India and extending its support and my contact number is +919939912878. My research supervisor is Dr. Ellen Mormon, Wilmore, KY and her office number is +1 859 858 2054. You may contact either of us at any time if you have questions about this study.

The purpose of this research is to study the role of the Bangalore Churches to support the North Indian children ministry relating to the children homes of Navjeevan Seva Mandal in North India.

The questionnaire will take approximately half an hour of your time. Your participation in this study is completely voluntary. If you choose to participate, you may still refuse to answer any question that you do not wish to answer. You may also withdraw from the study at any time.

There are no risks associated in filling this questionnaire. If ever you feel that way please inform me promptly. While there is no guaranteed benefit, it is possible that you will enjoy sharing your answers to these questions. This study is intended to benefit the North Indian children by the increased support of Bangalore Churches.

Your name will not be used in any of the reporting and writing related to this study. I will be the only person present while you fill the questionnaire. I plan to develop a dissertation based on the questionnaires along with my reading and historical research. This dissertation will be shared with my cohort colleagues and Asbury Theological Seminary faculty on the Asbury's Kentucky Campus.

I also plan to share some of my findings with my denominational leaders. Portions of the dissertation will be published as an article in the seminary's magazine. There is a possibility that I will publish this study or refer to it in published writing in the future. In this event I may alter some identifying details in order to further protect your anonymity.

By signing below, you are agreeing to fill out the questionnaire for this research study. Be sure that any questions you may have are answered to your satisfaction. If you agree to participate in this study, a copy of this document will be given to you.

Participants Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher's Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_



**APPENDIX C**

**Letter for Permission**

November 30th, 2018

Dear Pastor,

Subject: Letter seeking permission to allow the committee members to participate in the research study.

In partial requirement of the Doctor of Ministry Program at Asbury Theological Seminary, I am presently undertaking a research study on envisioning of Bangalore churches on the Significance of Children Ministry in North India and to maximize its support.

In view of this, may I request you to provide the response to my study and to permit your church committee members or the elders to be the respondents. Rest assured that the data

I will gather will be held in strict confidence and will be used solely for the purpose of this study.

I believe, you will consider and extend your cooperation.

With Grace and Peace,

Yours in His ministry,

Pethudu Muniappa, Johnvesly  
Researcher

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