

DOING THEOLOGY WITH INDIGENOUS CHILDREN: IN SEARCH OF A
METHODOLOGICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THEOLOGIZING WITH CHILDREN IN
TRIBAL CONTEXT OF INDIA

Abstract

Since 1989, after the UN General Assembly adopted the *Convention on the Rights of the Child*, there has been an increased recognition globally that children need to have more say in decisions that affect them. However, David A. Sims summarizes the general take of theology on children and its reason, “Children generally have not been viewed as active agents in the process of interpreting, constructing, negotiating and defining their relationships, societies, cultures, families, and churches. Theologically they have not been viewed as active, formative agents in their relationships with God, others, themselves, society and culture, but rather as passive recipients of formation for such relationships or as young, immature sinners in need of conversion” (2005, 11). Considering this neglect as a wound in our society, my paper after evaluating the traditions that include the theological methods of both Tribal Theology and Child Theology in India and argues that contextual theology for tribal children is theology with children, and proposes that a dialogical and spiral model could be an effective way to discern truth in the dialogical tension between context, tradition, and Scripture from a ‘relevance to the context’ perspective. Here doing theology with indigenous children is understood as mission with the vulnerable, deprived and discriminated children accepting child as a whole person before God and an agent of God, not an incomplete person or a partial person or an adult-in-the-making.