

THE METHODOLOGY OF ABDULLAH JAHANGIR IN
ANALYSING CHRISTIANITY WITH SPECIAL
REFERENCE TO *POBITRA BIBLE*

BY

MD HELEL UDDIN

A dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirement for
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ABSTRACT

The study of comparative religion did not begin until the 19th or 20th century. Many Muslim scholars studied comparative religions, used various methods, and developed religions other than Islam. The research has progressed over the phases of history, and its methodologies have also advanced along with modern sciences. Many Bangladeshi Muslim scholars have studied other religions, especially Christianity. They used several methods in response to Christian missionary propaganda against Islam and saved ordinary Muslims' faith. Christian missionary propaganda against Islam increased in the Indian subcontinent from the British colonies, including Bengal. After the independence of Bangladesh, missionary propaganda against Islam increased. They preached against other religions and converted poor people to Christianity in the name of various themes. It has been seen that in recent years, poor and uneducated people have been tempted to convert to Christianity by offering them multiple aids and that the number of converts to Christianity, especially Muslims, is increasing day by day. Many Bangladeshi 'ulamā' are currently using different methods, but the existing methods do not prevent people of other religions, including Muslims, from becoming Christians. However, it is an imperative and debatable issue to find such a methodology that helps prevent people, especially Muslims, from becoming Christians. This study aims to highlight and analyze the methods of an eminent Bangladeshi Muslim scholar, the late Khandaker Abdullah Jahangir, in the study of Christianity, emphasising his masterpiece *Pobitra Bible Porichiti O Porjalochona*, which is written in Bengali language. This study also attempts to explore the contributions of Abdullah Jahangir in the research of Christianity. Moreover, it highlights the socio-political conditions during Abdullah Jahangir's lifetime. The qualitative method is used for data collection and analysis in this study. This research has been conducted mainly based on library research, book, articles, online database, and textual analysis of Abdullah Jahangir works in the study of Christianity. This study found that Abdullah Jahangir used several methods in the study of Christianity, such as descriptive, textual, and logical approach that made him a prominent Muslim scholar in the study of Christianity in Bangladesh. This study also concludes that socio-political conditions greatly influence converting poor and uneducated people to Christianity in Bangladesh. Abdullah Jahangir's methodology can be followed to prevent people from becoming Christians, especially Muslims.

خلاصة البحث

بدأت الدراسة الفعلية لمقارنة الأديان في القرن التاسع عشر أو القرن العشرين، إلا أن العديد من العلماء المسلمين قديماً درسوها، واستخدموا فيها طرقاً مختلفة، ما جعلهم يهتمون بدراسة أديانٍ أخرى غير الإسلام، ولهذا تقدمت مراحل الدراسة عبر التاريخ كما تطورت منهجياتها جنباً إلى جنبٍ مع العلوم الحديثة. لقد درس العديد من علماء المسلمين البنغلاديشيين أدياناً أخرى، خاصةً النصرانية، واستخدموا عدة طرقٍ للرد على الدعاية النصرانية التبشيرية بهدف إنقاذ عقيدة المسلمين، وقد زادت الدعاية التبشيرية النصرانية في شبه القارة الهندية عن طريق المستعمرات البريطانية، بما في ذلك البنغال، حيث أنه وبعد استقلال بنغلاديش، ازدادت الدعاية التبشيرية ضد الإسلام، فقاموا بتحويل الفقراء إلى النصرانية تحت عناوين مختلفة، وقد لوحظ في السنوات الأخيرة أنه تم إغراء الفقراء وغير المتعلمين باعتماد النصرانية من خلال تقديم مختلف المساعدات ، وأن عدد المتحولين إلى النصرانية وخاصةً المسلمين يتزايد يوماً بعد يوم، ولهذا يستخدم العديد من العلماء البنغاليين حالياً أساليب مختلفة لتدارك هذا الأمر، إلا أنها لم تمنع أتباع الديانات الأخرى بما في ذلك المسلمين من التحول إلى النصرانية . ومع ذلك، فإن إيجاد منهجية تساهم في منع الناس وخاصةً المسلمين من التحول إلى النصرانية يعتبر مسألةً حتميةً . تهدف هذه الدراسة تسليط الضوء على منهجية الباحث المسلم البنغلاديشي البارز خاندان عبد الله جهانغير رحمه الله في دراسة النصرانية ، مع محاولة الكشف عن إسهاماته فيها، وكذلك النظر إلى الظروف الاجتماعية والسياسية من خلال حياته رحمه الله، مع التركيز بشكلٍ خاصٍ على تحفته الرائعة (Pobitra Bible Porichiti O Porjalochona) المكتوبة باللغة البنغالية، وقد تم في هذه الدراسة استخدام المنهجية النوعية لجمع البيانات وتحليلها، وتم إجراء هذا البحث بشكلٍ أساسيٍّ على أساس البحث في المكتبات والكتب والمقالات وقاعدة البيانات على الإنترنت والتحليل النصي لأعمال عبد الله جهانغير في دراسة النصرانية ، حيث توصلت الدراسة إلى أن عبد الله جهانغير استخدم عدة طرقٍ في دراسة النصرانية مثل المنهج الوصفي والنصي والمنطقي الذي جعله عالماً مسلماً بارزاً في دراسة النصرانية في بنغلاديش. وقد خلصت الدراسة أيضاً إلى أن الظروف الاجتماعية والسياسية لها تأثيرٌ كبيرٌ في تحويل الفقراء وغير المتعلمين إلى النصرانية في بنغلاديش، ولهذا يمكننا اتباع منهجية عبد الله جهانغير في محاولة منع الناس من التحول إلى النصرانية.

APPROVAL PAGE

I certify that I have supervised and read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion.

.....
Thameem Ushama
Supervisor

I certify that I have read this study and that in my opinion, it conforms to acceptable standards of scholarly presentation and is fully adequate, in scope and quality, as a dissertation for the degree of Master of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion.

.....
Fatmir Shehu
Examiner

This dissertation was submitted to the Department of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion.

.....
Nur Suriya Mohd Nor
Head, Department of Usul al-Din
and Comparative Religion

This dissertation was submitted to the Kulliyah of Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage and is accepted as a fulfilment of the requirement for the degree of Master of Usul al-Din and Comparative Religion.

.....
Shukran Abd. Rahman
Dean, Kulliyah of Islamic
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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

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Indeed, all praises are due to Allah, the All-Mighty, the creator of this universe. I have completed my Master's Degree in Islamic Revealed Knowledge and Heritage in Usūl al-Dīn and Comparative Religion by His mercy.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

For Muslim scholars, a study in other religions is not a new discipline. Many early Muslim scholars have made significant contributions to other religions, including Christianity, Judaism, Hinduism, and Buddhism. Al-Tabari, Shahrastani, Ibn Nadim, Ibn Hazm, al-Biruni, al-Faruqi are influential.

Their important works and contributions have also been categorised into different methods, for example, discourses, disputes, writings, exposition, and travel logs.¹ Some of these scholars' works have been portrayed as descriptive, disputative, or analytical in both approaches.² They have done studies on other religions through their encounters with people and cultures of non-Islamic faith rather than merely reading about them. As a result, the works of these Muslim scholars on other religions were systematic³ and unbiased⁴.

Bangladesh is the fourth largest Muslim country globally, with about 158.57 million⁵ located in South East Asia. It is often stated that Bangladesh is a place of religious diversity. People of different religions (Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Islam) live peacefully together in Bangladesh without conflicts.⁶ Islam has been the

¹ Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, *Early Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft: The works and Contributions of Abu Rayhan Muhammad Ibn Ahmad al-Biruni* (Kuala Lumpur: International Islamic thought and Civilization, 2003), 23.

² Ibid., 24

³ Donald Wiebe, *Religion, and truth: towards an alternative paradigm for the study of religion*. (New York: Mouton Publishers, 1981), 3.

⁴ Anis Malik Toha. "Objectivity and the scientific study of religion." *Intellectual Discourse*, 17, no. 1 (2009).

⁵The world factbook, Bangladesh. See: <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/bg.html#Peoplea>, viewed on 11 March 2011.

⁶ The tribe of Bangladesh are living in Chittagong Hill-tax area.

leading religion in Bengal since the beginning of the 13th century.⁷ Historically, Bengali Muslims were independent until the colonial power invaded Bengal. There were no threats, whether in politics or religious practice. Unfortunately, this peaceful situation was threatened after the arrival of the British and their missionaries. According to history, William Carey was the first to bring and patronize missionary propaganda in Bengal in 1773. Missionaries attacked the very foundations of Muslim beliefs and cultural entities.

After creating Bangladesh in 1971, missionary activities again gained prominence. They adopted a new outlook and strategy, including participation in the freedom movement, government policies, and constitutional rights since the constitution of Bangladesh guarantees all citizens the right to profess, practice or propagate any religion (Article 41). Therefore, the Christian missionaries took this opportunity to evangelize the poor and poorly educated individuals through various means (financial help, education, and treatment). The Christian missionaries carry out activities with the help of many NGOs under the banner of "development partner" working to remove poverty and bring education, progress, and enlightenment to the country. During the period 1971-1975, eight new missionaries entered the country, and the government's attitude was favourable toward them by extending facilities that help their objectives. Churches, missions, and Christian agencies flourished under such conditions.⁸

Among the Bangladeshi Muslim scholars who studied religions other than Islam were Munshi Meherullah, Sayed Sajjad Hossain, Maulana Abdur Rahim, Abdullah Jahangir, and many others. Each of them had its definition, methodology, and emphasis

⁷ C.A. Bayley, *Origins of Nationality of South Asia* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1998.

⁸ Md. Yousuf Ali and Abu Sadat Nurullah, *Challenges of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian Missions and their evangelization*, *Journal of International Islamic University Chittagong*, Vol. 4, 2008.

on studying other religions, especially Christianity. They are well known in the Indian subcontinent and Bangladesh for their works on other religions, especially Christianity and its mission. Most importantly, their studies on Christianity have been instrumental in helping Muslims counter the threat of Christianity and its false mission narratives in this region. The scholars' approach was to use dialogue, refutation, debates, and controversial discussions with non-Muslim scholars, making it more impressive.

Among these scholars, one of the most prominent Muslim scholars who directly challenged Christian propaganda was Abdullah Jahangir (1961-2016). He wrote more than 50 books in various aspects of the Islamic ideology in Arabic, English, and Bengali. He significantly contributed through his views and methodology in response to the offensive work of Christian missionaries against Islam. He was very concerned about the *imān* of ordinary Muslims because Christian missionaries very aggressively promoted their beliefs to ordinary Muslims, misleading them with the idea of *Isa-e-Dormo* or Muslims respect Prophet Isa (PBUH). Thus, he has authored several books on Christianity to prove that the missionary propaganda was false and that it was a threat to the faith of Bangladeshi Muslims and society. His work *Pobitra Bible: Poricity And Porjalochona* were of monumental significance in the study of Christianity, which presented a systematic study of the scriptural principles of Christianity.

Abdullah Jahangir's study of Christianity was to learn to understand Christianity and its missionary activities in Bangladesh. This is why he presented different approaches and methods in the study of Christianity. In this study, socio-political conditions are essential because Bangladesh has a diverse social and political landscape compared to other Asian countries like Pakistan, India, and Malaysia. Here, peoples' mind, understanding, attitude, behaviour, language, democracy, and politics are different.

To the researcher's best knowledge, this present study will be the first on Abdullah Jahangir's research on Christianity in the context of Bangladesh, especially his methodology in "*Pobitra Bible: Porichiti O Porjalochona*" (The Holy Bible: Introduction and Review).

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Many contemporary Bangladeshi Muslim scholars have written on other religions, especially on the methodologies in Christianity. They voiced their concern and criticized the activities of Christian missionaries publicly through different methods to counter the Christian missionary's false narratives in Bangladesh and maintain the *imān* of ordinary Muslims. Giving lectures is a standard method used against missionary propaganda, yet the number of conversions increases. International organizations claim that about 91,000 Muslims were converted into Christianity from 2010 to 2015.⁹

It can be argued that the existing methods of Muslim scholars do not influence poor and illiterate Muslims enough to minimize their conversion to Christianity. There are concerns to formulate an appropriate methodology to prevent missionary narratives and save poor and illiterate Muslims. But there is hardly any research conducted in this field in the socio-political context of Bangladesh. Socio-political conditions are essential in this study for understanding the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir.

Abdullah Jahangir is another influential Muslim scholar who also spoke against Christian missionary's propaganda. He has contributed significantly in confronting the missionary narratives against Islam through his methods. He has written many books in the area of Christianity in the context of Bangladesh. *Pobitra Bible: Poricity and*

⁹ Samuel Smith, "*Thousands of Muslims Converting to Christianity in Bangladesh Despite Rising Persecution.*" Christian Post, (2016).

Porjalochona (The Holy Bible: Introduction and Review) explain a detailed account of Christian missionaries' strategies.

Therefore, the purpose of this study is to examine Abdullah Jahangir's methodology in the study of Christianity and in confronting missionaries used in his book *Pobitra Bible* to protect ordinary Muslims from converting to Christianity. The socio-political conditions will also be highlighted during his time that influenced him to study Christianity. The study will also explore the life, collective works, and contributions of Abdullah Jahangir in the research of Christianity and its missionary works in the context of Bangladesh.

1.3 RESEARCH QUESTION

1. What are the works and contributions of Abdullah Jahangir in the field of challenging Christianity?
2. What are the socio-political conditions that influenced Abdullah Jahangir to work on Christianity?
3. What are the methodologies used by Abdullah Jahangir in confronting Christian missionaries and interpreting Christianity in *Pobitra Bible: Poricity and Porjalochona*?

1.4 RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

The study aims to fulfil the following objectives

1. To study the life, works, and contributions of Abdullah Jahangir in the field of Christianity.
2. To investigate the socio-political conditions that influenced Abdullah Jahangir to work on Christianity.

3. To examine the methodologies used by Abdullah Jahangir in confronting Christian missionaries and interpreting Christianity in *Pobitra Bible: Poricity and Porjalochona*.

1.5 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This research aims to present the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir as illustrated in his book *Pobitra Bible: Poricity O Porjalochona (The Holy Bible: Introduction And Review)*. This thesis will help scholars and researchers to learn the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir in challenging the spread of Christianity. The scholars and researchers will also find information about his life, works, and contributions in the study of Christianity. The findings of this research will enrich the perspective of modern comparative religion with the insights of one of the most original Muslim treaties in theology and improve understanding of contemporary Muslim approaches to comparative religious studies.

1.6 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research will use textual references qualitative in nature. It will use Abdullah Jahangir's books, documents, articles, and other reading materials as its primary sources. When discussing Abdullah Jahangir methodology, both related and relevant primary (Books) and secondary (Articles, online data) sources will be used. The main arguments will be based on a textual understanding of Abdullah Jahangir writings. This study will pursue the combination of textual review, descriptive, and inter-textual methods to gather findings. However, this study will concentrate on a particular book of Abdullah Jahangir, namely *Pobitra Bible: Poricity And Porjalochona (The Holy Bible: Introduction And Review)* and analyze his views on the study of Christianity. As his

writings are in Bengali, which is not translated into other languages, this study attempts to solve relevant portions of his discourse for evaluation.

1.7 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

As the topic suggests, this study aims to discuss the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir in the study of Christianity, mainly which methods he employed in his particular reference book *Pobitro Bible: porichiti o porjalochona*. This study also intends to explore Abdullah Jahangir's life, works and contributions in the study of Islam and Christianity. This research attempts to cover the socio-political condition that influenced him to write on Christianity.

1.8 LITERATURE REVIEW

It should be noted that the principal approach of this research is to present the detailed outline of Abdullah Jahangir's methodology in the study of Christianity in the context of Bangladesh depending on the literature of Abdullah Jahangir. Relevant books and articles will be reviewed on the issue of methodology and Christianity in Bangladesh. Abdullah Jahangir wrote many books in Bengali, Arabic, and English to the field of Christianity. This review would examine them to determine the validity of his reasoning.

Based on the researcher's knowledge, no research has been conducted on the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir in the study of Christianity, especially on his book *Pobitro Bible: Porichiti O Porjalochona* (The Holy Bible: Introduction and Review). Only a tiny portion of it has been conducted on his biography and contribution. However, many academicians in Bangladesh have written books and articles on Christianity. Selected books and articles were reviewed and included in this study.

Ghulam Haider Aasi has written an important book entitled "*Muslim understanding of other religions: A study of Ibn hazm's Kitab al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwah' wa al-Nihal*".¹⁰ In this book, the author introduces Ibn Hazm as a classical Muslim scholar in the study of comparative religions. He also examines the methodology of Ibn Hazm in his masterpiece *Kitab al-Fasl*. The author claims that *Kitab al-Fasl* is one of the most systemic and original works in the history of comparative religion. The author discusses the criticism of Ibn Hazm regarding the Bible. He points out that the root of comparative religion is the Qur'ān and Sunnah, and Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) marked the beginning of this discipline. Ibn Hazm's methodology employed in his book *Kitab al-Fasl* will be used in this thesis to understand the method of Abdullah Jahangir.

A resourceful article is written by Anis Malik Toha entitled "Religionswissenschaft between the Objectivity and Subjectivity of Its Practitioners".¹¹ The author emphasizes objectivity and subjectivity in the study of religion. The author points out that objectivity usually exists in research or review that is done with no prejudice. However, according to the concept of scholars in the study of religions, "descriptiveness' and value-free-ness" are the measurement of objectivity which is controversial and irrational.¹² Nevertheless, this author remains consistent that objectivity is linked directly to the "object". Concerning the Qur'ān, objectivity is indirectly called 'adl (justice).¹³ When following 'adl, it is crucial to view the entity as it is, without discrimination. Objectivity is also vital and must be maintained in the study

¹⁰ Ghulam Haider Aasi, "*Muslim understanding of other religions: A study of Ibn Hazm's Kitab al-Fasl fi al-Milal wa al-Ahwah' wa al-Nihal*". Adam Publishers & Distributors, New Delhi. 2004.

¹¹ Anis Malik Toha, "Objectivity and Scientific Study of Religion", *Intellectual Discourse*, vol. 17, no. 1(2009).

¹² *Ibid.*, 1.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.

of religions by scholars to be consistent in their conclusions of other religions. There are several articles written on the biography and contribution of Abdullah Jahangir some of are discussed below:

Abul Kalam Azad edits a memoir entitled in Bengali "*Preronar Batigor* (The Beacon of Inspiration)" on Abdullah Jahangir's life and contribution. After the death of Abdullah Jahangir, this was the first work on the biography of Abdullah Jahangir composed by his colleagues, scholars, friends, and students. In this memory text, one of the Bangladeshi scholar named Abdur Rauf narrates that supreme court former prime judge Abdullah Jahangir was a versatile scholar in the twenty-first century. He contributed hugely to several disciplines such as Ḥadīth, *Fiqh*, and Christianity. Therefore, he wrote numerous books and articles in Bengali in both the Arabic and English languages. He claims that lots of people from different groups are influenced by Abdullah Jahangir's methodology in *da'wah*. He explains that Abdullah Jahangir worked hard to unite all Muslim sects in one platform, and he always emphasized a moderate approach.

An article entitled "*Abdullah Jahangir O Tar Fiqhi Rachaanaboly: Ekti Poddotigoto Bislesion* (Abdullah Jahangir and his works in Fiqh: a systematic analysis)"¹⁴ written by Meer Monjor Mahmood will also be used in this study. In this article, the author analyses Abdullah Jahangir's life, contributions, scholarship, intellectual legacy in various disciplines. The author also highlights his works in response to the Christian missionary's activities in Bangladesh. He also mentions that Abdullah Jahangir was very concerned about the Christian missionary's false narratives

¹⁴ Meer Monjor Mahmood, *Abdullah Jahangir O Tar Fiqhi Rachaanaboly: Ekti Poddotigoto Bislesion*, (Dhaka: Islami Ain O Bichar, Vol. 14, Issue, 54, 2018).

and the conversion of Muslims to Christianity in Bangladesh. However, he avoids discussing Abdullah Jahangir's methodology in analysing Christianity.

In this section, we will review some articles regarding the Christian missionaries' activities in Bangladesh.

An essential article that Yousuf Ali and Sadat Nurullah write titled: "*Challenges of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian Missions and Their Evangelization*".¹⁵ The article discusses the challenges of *da'wah* and Christian missionaries' false propaganda against Islam. Most importantly, it describes the Christian missionaries' activities in the name of Bangladesh government development partner by numerous NGOs. The writer addresses the multidimensional approach adopted by the Christian missions to evangelize people in every nook and corner of the country and the activities carried out by various churches without considering the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir in the study of Christianity.

"*Bangladeshe Tulanamulok Dharmatatta Charchar Shwrup O Bikashdhara* (Comparative Religion practice and development in Bangladesh)"¹⁶ is a book written in Bengali by Muhammad Abdur Rahman Anwari. The book provides a detailed description of the emergence of other religions, namely Hinduism, Christianity, Buddhism and Islam and their historical development in Bangladesh. In particular, the author discusses the contribution of Muslim and non-Muslim scholars who studied comparative religion. However, the writer does not narrate the impact of Christian propaganda against Islam on his fellow Muslim brothers and sisters in Bangladesh.

¹⁵ Md.Yousuf Ali and Sadat Nurullah, *Challenges of Islamic Da'wah in Bangladesh: The Christian Missions and Their Evangelization*, (IIUC Studies, Vol. 4, 2007) 87-108

¹⁶ Muhammad Abdur Rahman Anwari, *Bangladeshe Tulanamulok Dharmatatta Charchar Shwrup O Bikashdhara* (Comparative Religion practice and development in Bangladesh) (The University Grants commission of Bangladesh, 2014).

Another critical article was written by Christian J. Anderson with the title, "*Navigating the Constraints of the Ummah: A Comparison of Christ Movements in Iran and Bangladesh.*"¹⁷ In this article, the author discusses the socio-political problem of becoming a disciple of Jesus in the Muslim majority country. Anderson also claims that Muslims and Christians are both communities of the *Ummah* of Jesus. Still, socio-political factors, communal, religious, demographic, and cultural factors are the main obstacles to establish Jesus as a significant religious figure in a Muslim majority country. Later, the writer makes a comparison between Bangladesh and Iran regarding missionary work. He proclaims that the Iranian government is the main obstacle to turning Iranians into followers of Jesus and all its itinerants, including evangelizing, worship, and baptism. In the case of Bangladesh, the author states that there are four disciples of Jesus movement called Isai Muslims, Christian, Isai, and those Muslim who do not practice Islam in their life but maintain a good relationship with Christian and Muslim community. These groups are working actively without any significant trouble from the government and local people. The writer, however, does not give any evidence in confronting missionaries and Christianity.

An article was entitled "*Religious landscape of Bangladesh: a primer*"¹⁸ by Nathaniel Adams. This article discusses the prime religion in Bangladesh. Most importantly, it provides the historical evaluation of Christianity in Bangladesh and its development. It also explains the social organizations of Christianity and their contribution to developing Bangladesh. Those organizations involved in supporting

¹⁷ J. Anderson Christian, *Navigating the Constraints of the Ummah: A Comparison of Christ Movements in Iran and Bangladesh*. *Peripheral Vision* (2018): 117.

¹⁸ Barkley centre for religion, peace, and world affairs at Georgetown University. *Religious landscape of Bangladesh: a primer*, (Policy Brief, 2014).

needy people. This paper conveys the message of missionary activities without highlighting the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir.

*"The role of NGOs in promoting Christianity: the case of Bangladesh"*¹⁹ is an article written based on research done by Md. Saidul Islam. In this article, the author stresses the offensive work of NGOs in Bangladesh, who are promoting Christianity in Muslim society in the development partner of the Bangladesh government. The researcher also addresses that NGOs direct and indirect involvement in evangelizing has increased tensions and social problems in Bangladesh.

Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman's book, titled *Early Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft*,²⁰ is another valuable reference for this research. However, the main subject of this book is Al-Biruni's works and his approach to comparative religion. According to her, the Qur'ān and the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH) traditions are the root methods of comparative religion. The author then describes the contributing factors that led Muslim scholars to devote themselves to studying other religions.

In conclusion, the literature that has been reviewed shows that there are sufficient related and relevant data and information discussed by different writers and researchers. Various issues and points about Christianity in Bangladesh have been analysed including, the history of Christianity in Bangladesh, evangelization, NGOs promoting Christianity, socio-political progress with agendas, and the impact of evangelization on ordinary Muslims. Therefore, it is hoped that this study will help bring a new dimension to Christianity in Bangladesh. In brief, this study will focus mainly on the methodology of Abdullah Jahangir in the study of confronting and

¹⁹ Md. Saidul Islam, *the role of NGOs in promoting Christianity: the case of Bangladesh*. Intellectual Discourse 9, no. 2 (2001).

²⁰ Kamar Oniah Kamaruzaman, *Early Muslim Scholarship in Religionswissenschaft*. International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization, 2003.

challenging Christianity and its missionary activities, his views, and socio-political context, which led him to write *Pobitro Bible: Porichiti O Porjalochona* (The Holy Bible: Introduction and Review).

CHAPTER TWO

THE LIFE AND CONTRIBUTIONS OF ABDULLAH JAHANGIR

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter comprises a brief biography of Abdullah Jahangir and his contributions as an Islamic scholar. His extensive works, enlightening books, and articles on Islam and contemporary issues are impressive, and he has attracted the attention of Muslims across the subcontinent. Modern writers and scholars acknowledged him as one of the prominent Islamic scholars of the 21st century. According to Emajuddin Ahamed²¹, Abdullah Jahangir was a versatile Muslim scholar of the 21st century. His knowledge spread across many disciplines, including the Qur'ān, Ḥadīth, *Fiqh*, history, economy, and Arabic literature. Muhammad 'Abd AR-Rauf²², former Chief Justice of Bangladesh, regards him as an efficient *dā'ī* (preacher) who speaks in a rational and scholarly manner. His discussion and *da'wah* methods enlightened the '*ulamā*', Students, and ordinary Muslims in Bangladesh. He reflected mainly on living a *shirk* and *bid'ah*-free life. He tried his best to unite all the Muslim sects in the country. The present researcher noted that Bengali to English translation of Abdullah Jahangir's books and documents had been done.

2.2 EARLY LIFE

The full name of Abdullah Jahangir is Khandaker (ANM) Abū Naser Muhammad Abdullah Jahangir. His surname is Khandaker, but he is well known as Abdullah Jahangir. Abdullah Jahangir was born on 1st February 1961 to a distinguished Muslim

²¹ Emajuddin Ahamed was a former Vice Cancellor of Dhaka University, Bangladesh.

²² Muhammad Abdur Rauf was former Chief Justice of Bangladesh Supreme Court.