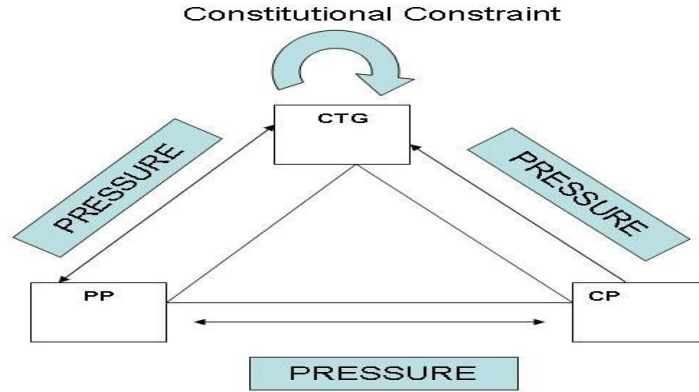# A Triangular Decision Making Model for CTG

Md. Anwarul Kabir and Taimun E Mursalin

Introduction: Unlike the past Care Taker Governments (CTGs), this time it has fallen in a very complex and unprecedented situation. Especially, by assuming the power of CTG head by the partisan president Prof. Iajuddin Ahmed has placed the CTG into hell-fire. However, inline of the aspiration of the common people, who are very eager to see a meaningful election, the CTG must overcome all of its constraints and come forward to fulfil its constitutional and moral task to conduct the forthcoming election as an impartial referee in the playground. Unfortunately, for this caretaker government the context is completely different from its predecessors. The predecessors caretaker governments led by Justice Shahab Uddin Ahmed, Justice Habibur Rahman or Justice Latifur Rahman did not face such obstacles as the present CTG is facing. The heads of those CTGs' were non partisan and there was clear cut demarcation between head of the state and the executive head of the government. Besides, at that time the hostility between the major two parties was not at its momentum as we are observing now. These features of the past caretaker governments helped much in creating a congenial atmosphere in holding a free and fair election. Other thing should be brought into account that at present, due to booming of information technology and media concerns, the common people are more concerned about the election than ever. A recent survey carried out by Kamran (published in the Daily Star and Prothom Alo, October 06, 2006) has revealed that the majority of the people are neither supporters of BNP-led alliance nor the AL-led alliance. These people, in fact, want to see a prosperous Bangladesh in near future through true practice of real democracy. This time these non-partisan people will not act as silent observer as they did in the last franchises.

For this different context, perhaps, the CTG needs a model to be followed to discharge its noble assignment effectively and efficiently with a view to fulfilling its constitutional obligation. A triangular working model as discussed below can pave the way to accomplish the assigned task within the present complex setup of the CTG in the context of extraordinary political crisis.

Proposed Triangular Model: This decision making model consists of three major components namely, Caretaker Government (CTG), Political Parties (PP) and Common People (CP). In making decision, they can exert pressure on each other as shown in the figure. As the figure shows with a two way arrow that the CTG can exert pressure on PP and vice-versa. Similarly PP can also exert force on CP and vice versa. However, the CP can exert pressure on the CTG but the opposite (i.e. exertion of pressure by the CTG on the CP) is not permitted in this model. In this model, the additional constraint to be faced by the CTG is the constitution as depicted in the diagram.

Now in taking crucial decision following this model, the CTG should assess the strength of pressures exerted on it by the PP and CP and if necessary it should also exert pressure on the PP. Besides in taking the decision it should also consider the constitutional constraint if any.

Now the question is how to quantify the respective strengths of pressure exerted by each component on other, In fact, in this model pressure signifies the perception of each component on certain decision. As for example in taking decision of reconstitution of Election Commission, the perceptions of political parties will be treated as exerted pressure on CTG. This perception can be quantified by assessing the seriousness of their attitude towards particular decision either in favour or against. The quantified perception of the political party is termed as PIPP(Perception Index of Political Parties). The total range for this PIPP is ±50 Where +ve value of the index signifies the positive notion toward particular decision whereas –ve value implies a negative notion towards that decision. This ranges will be distributed among the political parties based on the ratio of votes acquired by different political parties in the previous elections. The summation of PIPP may be termed as Resultant Perception of Political Party (RPPP) which in fact the exerted pressure on CTG by PP. So in a equation we can show: RPPP = ∑PIPP

For quantification of the pressure exerted by the CP on CTG on particular issue we need to assess the perceptions of different non-political platforms, media (both printed and electronic medias), concerned Internet Web groups etc. Besides, the perceptions can also be obtained on particular issue in question through survey by adopting random sample method on the cross section of the population. This perception can be quantified by assessing the seriousness of their attitude towards particular decision either in favour or against. The quantified perception of the common people is termed as Percept Index of Common People (PICP).. The score for this PICP is ±100. Where +ve value of the index signifies the positive notion towards particular decision whereas –ve value implies a negative notion towards that decision.

The rationale for providing highest point to PICP based on the fact that the majority of the people in the country have no any affiliation to particular political party as reflected in different surveys and observations. In our model we have considered only those people

who are not affiliated to any party politics as common people (CP). So, it can be assumed that the probability of PICP will be more logical and rational as they are not politically biased. The summation of all PIPP is termed as Resultant Perception of Common People (RPCP) which in fact the exerted pressure on CTG by PP.

$$RPCP = \sum PICP$$

Again in our model PP can also exert pressure on the CP and vice versa. However, as we are considering here the decision making process of CTG, we can ignore the pressure exerted by PP on CP and vice-versa though they have indirect impact on the decision making process of CTG.

The final Deciding Factor (DF), in this model is given by, DF=RPPP+RPCP

A positive value of DF implies that a positive decision should be made on particular issue, whereas a negative value signifies that a negative decision should be made on that issue. However, whatever the value of DF, as there is a constitutional constraint, the CTG should carefully examine whether there is any constitutional restriction in taking such a decision. In that case, depending on the importance of the issue, the CTG may refer it to the Supreme Court for its opinion. Again, if DF gives zero value then it means a deadlock and in that case the CTG can take its own decision within the advisory council in a democratic way. However, in finalizing the decision it should also examine if there is any constitutional constraint and if there is any, it should ask the opinion of the Supreme Court on that particular issue.

A Test Case: We have applied the above Triangular Model for taking decision on the question of reconstitution of Election Commission just after the assumption of power by the present CTG using empirical data and data obtained from the secondary sources.

In our case, to assess the strengths of the exerted pressure by the PP on the CTG is straightforward considering the bipolar setup of the present political scenario of the contemporary Bangladesh. Presently in Bangladesh, two major political alliances, namely BNP-led 4 party alliance and AL-led 14 party alliance are dominating the politics and they are the major contestant in the forthcoming election. By considering the votes share in the last election (which are neck to neck) we have assigned equal highest (or lowest) score for PIPP for these two alliances and which is ±25. We have not considered the Ershad-led alliance (who share about 7% votes) as at the time of our survey this alliance had no comment on the reconstitution of EC. Besides we have not considered any PIPP score outside the major two alliances as they have very insignificant vote share in the last election.

We have measured attitudes of both AL-led 14 party alliance and BNP-led 4 party alliance to get their perception on the issue of reconstitution of the Election Commission.. For this, we have talked to active party members, supporters of both alliances on this issue. Our observations have confirmed that AL-led 14 party alliance are very much rigid in the question of total reconstitution of the EC. On the other hand, we have found that

around 50% of BNP-alliance supporters or activist have objection in reconstitution and other 40% have no objection if it is based under constitutional provision and 40% have 10% are confused. Based on this we get PIPP for Al-led-alliance is +25 whereas PIPP for BNP-led 4 party alliance is about -12.5.

So, we get the value for RPPP= $\sum$PIPP = +25- 12.5= 12.5

To get the Resultant Perception of the Common People (RPCP), we have evaluated the Perception Index of Common People (PICP) by surveying a cross section of the population, examining the views expressed in widely circulated newspapers (for this we have examined editorial/articles/ letters from the readers) and investigating the perceptions of some non-political organisations. (e.g. CPD, Sujon). However, due to time and resource constraints, we could not have examined relevant discussions/information broadcasted by the electronic medias or relevant Websites.. In distributing score we have given more emphasis on the survey by assigning ±50. We have assigned ±30 for newspapers and ±20 for the non-political organisation.

After the assumption in power by the present CTG, we have surveyed on 100 people who are not affiliated to any political parties. We have chosen our sample randomly giving some emphasis that it should cover all groups including working class, students, housewives, and professional class of different categories. Besides, out of 100 sample population, we have also considered 50 men and 50 women discarding any risk of gender biased outcome. We have also considered all adult age groups in our sample.

In our survey, 75% of the interviewees have wanted to see the complete reconstitution of the present EC, 10% have thought that removal of CEC Justice Aziz would be enough and 10% have opined that reconstitution is not required to ensure free and fair election. Assessing above stated information, we get the Perception Index for Common People (PICP) using the survey is 37.5

By examining the editorials, articles and letters from readers published on the issue in widely circulated newspapers (we have considered three widely circulated Bengali dailies and one English daily) of the last week of October, we have found that about 90% of these are in favour of total reconstitution of the EC. So the value for PICP using the newspaper can be scored as 27.

Again we have observed that all of the non-political organisations who are concerned about free and fair election are in favour of total reconstitution of the EC. So we can assign full positive score (i.e. +20) for the PICP using non-political organisations.

So, we get Resultant Perception of the Common People ,
RPCP = $\sum$PICP= 37.5+27+20=84.5

Now the Deciding Factor, DF = RPPP+ RPCP = 12.5+84.5= 97.0 which is a large positive number and hence it suggests the CTG to take decision in favour of reconstitution o f the EC.

Now the CTG should find out if there is any constitutional barrier in taking this decision. It is claimed by certain quarters that the Election Commissioner's position is a constitutional post and it is not possible to remove the EC by the government. But this is not hundred percent true. There are gross allegation against the CEC M. A. Aziz and his deputies regarding preparation of voters list. For this, following the articles 96(4b), 96(5) and 96(6) by forming the supreme judicial council it is possible .to remove the CEC and other commissioners of the EC.

Besides, by enforcing article 91(1), it is also possible to remove at least two of the commissioners (CEC Justice M. A. Aziz and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman) as this article states that : "Except as provided in clause(2) a person who has held office as a Judge otherwise than as an Additional Judge shall not, after his retirement or removal there from plead or act before any court or authority or hold any office of profit in the service of the Republic, not being a judicial or quasi-judicial office or the office of Chief Adviser or Adviser."   Noted that both Justice M. A Aziz and Justice Mahfuzur Rahman are retired from the higher court by this time and are no more eligible to hold any position in the service of the republic.

Above discussions have clearly stated that constitutionally the EC can be reconstituted if the CTG intends to do so. So, following the above triangular model if the CTG could make the right decision in time then the nation would not have faced such crisis as it is facing now.

Conclusive Remark: This triangular decision making model gives more value towards common people perception and this can be applied in making any crucial decision. Especially, the CTG at this moment has to take much crucial decision (e.g. updating voters list, depoliticising of the present administrative setup, curbing the influence of black money). For quick decisions on crucial issues, this model will help the CTG (if it is adopted at all.) within shortest possible time. The model needs empirical survey (if properly designed then the sample size need not be a big one), analysis of views expressed in medias, opinions of non-political organisations on the issue on which the decision is to be taken, and these are not a big deal at all. But the model will work only if the CTG as a whole (including CA) is unbiased and not inclined to any political party or alliance.

Both the authors are Faculty Members of Computer Science, AIUB