

1. **devoid of** (noun) – lacking, without, free of/free from.
2. **defection** (noun) – desertion, absconding, decamping.
3. **opportunism** (noun) – expediency/exploitation, taking advantage, pragmatism.
4. **stay clear of** (phrase) – keep away from, avoid, shun.
5. **Anti-defection law** (noun) – The 10th Schedule to the Constitution, popularly referred to as the ‘Anti-Defection Law,’ was inserted by the 52nd Amendment in 1985. The grounds of disqualification are specified in Paragraph 2 of the 10th Schedule. A member would incur a disqualification under paragraph 2 (1) (a) when he “voluntarily gives up his membership of a party” and under 2 (1) (b) when he/she votes (or abstains from voting) contrary to the directive issued by the party. (Courtesy: [The Hindu](#)).
6. **stipulate** (verb) – formulate/specify, prescribe, set down/ lay down.
7. **breakaway** (noun) – separatist, secessionist, dissenting group.
8. **constitute** (verb) – compose, form, make up/account for.
9. **command** (verb) – obtain, secure, receive/get.
10. **profile** (noun) – representation.
11. **greener pastures** (noun) – any new, better place or condition that is more favorable or beneficial.
12. **diminish** (verb) – decrease, reduce, decline.
13. **dip** (verb) – decrease, plunge, drop.
14. **equation** (noun) – association, connection, likening.
15. **cloud** (noun) – threat, menace; trouble, problem.
16. **suspicion** (noun) – misgiving, doubt/qualm, scepticism.
17. **curry favour** (noun) – bring oneself into favour with someone by flattering (praising) to gain advantage or attention.
18. **zero tolerance** (noun) – a complete refusal to accept certain behavior (Courtesy: VOA Learning English).
19. **unhinder** (verb) – unrestrain, clear, unconstrain.
20. **accommodate** (verb) – help/assist, serve; adjust/attune.
21. **castigate** (verb) – criticize, censure, reprimand/rebuke.
22. **accrual** (noun) – growth, increase, accumulation/collection.
23. **outweigh** (verb) – supersede, offset, cancel out.
24. **pretence** (noun) – (outward) appearance, impression/image, display.
25. **reflect well on** (verb) – discredit, disgrace, shame/put in a bad light.
26. **with a difference** (phrase) – having a new element/characteristic.
27. **ideology** (noun) – beliefs, ideas/opinions, principles.
28. **undermine** (verb) – weaken, spoil, damage.
29. **vibrant** (adjective) – strong, intense; spirited, determined.

## Devoid of principle: on TDP crisis

### The defection of four TDP Rajya Sabha MPs to the BJP raises troubling questions

The recent defection of [four Rajya Sabha MPs from the Telugu Desam Party to the ruling Bharatiya Janata Party](#), merely a month after simultaneous Assembly and Lok

Sabha elections in Andhra Pradesh, can only be termed as political opportunism. The fact that these MPs merged with the BJP as a group helped them stay clear of the anti-defection law, which stipulates that a breakaway group constitute at least two-thirds of a legislative party's strength and that it merge with another party. The TDP had been reduced to just 23 and two seats in the newly elected Andhra Pradesh and Telangana Assemblies, respectively. It now commands a much lower legislative profile with just two members in the Rajya Sabha and three in the Lok Sabha. There is a tendency among legislators to seek greener pastures at a time of crisis for their parties, but the nature of these defections suggests that this was not a simple case of leaving a party whose political strength had considerably diminished. The BJP is even more of a non-player in Andhra Pradesh as it does not hold a single seat in the current Assembly and its vote share dipped in comparison to the previous Assembly elections. The reasons for the defections appear to have little to do with the political equations in the parent State.

Some of the defecting legislators have a cloud of suspicion over them as they were subjected to probes by Central Bureau of Investigation, Enforcement Directorate and Income Tax officials over financial transactions. It would be in order to ask whether the defections are aimed at currying favour with the government at the Centre in regard to the investigations. The NDA government led by Prime Minister Narendra Modi has promised zero tolerance on corruption, and it is to be hoped that the investigations against two of the defecting MPs continue unhindered. At the same time, the fact that the BJP has chosen to accommodate legislators the party had only months ago castigated for being corrupt, and against whom one of its own MPs had sought action from the **Rajya Sabha** ethics committee, suggests that the benefits of accrual to its numbers outweighed even the pretence of principle. The BJP has managed to increase its strength in the Rajya Sabha to 75 with the addition of the defectors from the TDP. Fresh elections to the Rajya Sabha are due for a substantive number of seats by 2020, and defections such as these will help the ruling combine get closer to the majority mark in the 245-member Upper House. Even if it is justified as an exercise to increase numbers, it does not reflect well on the BJP, which claims to be a party with a difference. Defections that are not based on ideology or principle undermine parliamentary democracy; a vibrant opposition is equally vital to ensure an efficient government.