

1. look away (phrasal verb) – avert/avoid/turn gaze away from someone/something.
2. dilemma (noun) – quandary, predicament, difficulty.
3. stocktaking (noun) – the process of accessing/reviewing one's situation.
4. off-the-cuff (phrase) – without preparation, without rehearsal, impromptu.
5. in the light of (phrase) – considering, taking into account, keeping in mind.
6. dismal (adjective) – bad, poor, awful/terrible.
7. seemingly (adverb) – apparently, evidently, on the face of it.
8. unmoved (adjective) – unaffected, untouched, untroubled.
9. insist on (verb) – ask for, request, press/push for.
10. persuade (verb) – convince, induce, coax/prompt.
11. shadow (verb) – follow, pursue, trail/track.
12. devoid of (adjective) – lacking, without, free of/free from.
13. coherent (adjective) – logical, reasonable, rational.
14. cementing (adjective) – joining, connecting, strengthening.
15. glue (noun) – adhesive, fixative, paste/gum.
16. currency (noun) – prevalence, exposure, acceptance, popularity.
17. invoke (verb) – bring on/out, evoke, induce/cause.
18. hark back (phrasal verb) – recall, recollect, think of.
19. formative (adjective) – developing, decisive, determining.
20. address (verb) – attend to, tackle, deal with.
21. unflinchingly (adverb) – firmly, resolutely, determinedly.
22. symptomatic (adjective) – indicative, signalling, warning.
23. disenchantment (noun) – disappointment, dissatisfaction, discontent.
24. opaque (adjective) – non-transparent, unclear, mysterious/doubtful.
25. unaccountable (adjective) – unsolvable, inexplicable, puzzling.
26. outreach (noun) – the level of reaching out/activity/effort; involvement.
27. nimbly (adverb) – actively, briskly, smartly,
28. face up to (verb) – to acknowledge that a tough situation is existing and that must be dealt with.
29. route (noun) – defeat, overwhelming (very large/massive/huge) defeat.
30. disintegrate (verb) – break apart, fall apart, fall to pieces.
31. liken (verb) – compare, equate, match/correlate.
32. stick to (phrasal verb) – abide by, adhere to, keep/hold to.
33. resolve (noun) – decision, resolution, commitment.
34. revitalization (noun) – revival, rejuvenation, resuscitation.
35. hollow out (verb) – remove, empty, cut out.
36. intra- (prefix) – within.
37. decentralise (verb) – transfer of the power/control (of a department/organisation/government) from a single place to other locations.
38. bound to (adjective) – certain/sure, very likely, guaranteed.
39. cohere (verb) – hold together, cling, form a whole.
40. sustain (verb) – carry on, keep going, keep alive, prolong/continue.
41. dynast (noun) – a member of a powerful family, a hereditary ruler.
42. half-hearted (adjective) – unenthusiastic, indifferent, dispassionate.
43. enfeeblement (noun) – an act of making something weak/feeble/paralyze.
44. invigorate (verb) – energize, galvanize, fortify/strengthen.
45. polity (noun) – a politically organized society (or state or unit).

Facing the debacle: Congress cannot look away from the dynasty dilemma

Congress's stocktaking must be deeper than an off-the-cuff take on Rahul Gandhi

In light of the [Congress's dismal defeat in the 17th general election](#), Congress president [Rahul Gandhi's offer to resign from his party post](#) at the Congress Working Committee on Saturday was on expected lines. What came as a surprise is the indication that he was seemingly unmoved by the CWC resolution that urged him to continue as president and restructure the party. Either way, whether Mr. Gandhi finally insists on quitting or allows himself to be persuaded otherwise, the party cannot look away from a dilemma that has shadowed it for long: the [double-edged sword of the dynasty](#). Devoid of a coherent ideology or organisational structure, especially over the past two decades, the Nehru-Gandhi dynasty has remained the party's cementing glue. The family is projected as the party's emotional currency with the public and the Gandhi surname is invoked to hark back to the formative years of modern India. However, now in 2019, facing its toughest crisis, the Congress must address the question unflinchingly, and in depth, if it is to refresh itself as a political force. The decline of the Congress is symptomatic of the fading appeal of the old ways of conducting politics and of the disenchantment with opaque and unaccountable power-wielding by political dynasties. Also, as with the Left and Mandal parties, the Congress has collectively failed to upgrade its message, modes of outreach and organisational structures. But the Congress's success in nimbly facing up to the rout is vital if India is to have a coherent political opposition that keeps the government of the day democratically accountable.

Of course, Congress leaders argue that the party would disintegrate if Mr. Gandhi were to quit. Mr. Gandhi, who had once likened power to poison, must take full responsibility for his party's debacle. However, figuring out the form that this account-taking must assume is what makes it a difficult moment for him and the Congress. Whether Mr. Gandhi sticks to his resolve to quit or not, the party will have to go through a process of revitalisation that deals with the hollowing out of its intra-party democracy. Any organisational reform that does not decentralise decision-making and fix accountability at all levels is bound to fail. It

must involve a frank assessment of the Congress's risk of failing to cohere if Mr. Gandhi were to abruptly leave his post as party president. True, the Congress may well be able to sustain itself without a dynast. But unless the new leadership emerges through a truly democratic exercise, and is truly independent of the dynasty, any half-hearted restructuring will only lead to the enfeeblement of the party. A dynasty-free Congress will surely invigorate the Indian polity, but a Congress-free polity could well prove dangerous for Indian democracy.