

BYSTANDER EFFECT

Meaning / Definition

The **Bystander Effect** refers to the phenomenon where **individuals are less likely to help a victim when other people are present.**

The more the number of bystanders, the less likely help is given.

Key Study

The concept was experimentally studied by:

- John Darley
- Bibb Latané

Their research was inspired by the 1964 murder of Kitty Genovese in New York.

Reasons for Bystander Effect

1. Diffusion of Responsibility

- Responsibility is shared among all bystanders.
- Each person thinks someone else will help.

2. Pluralistic Ignorance

- People look at others to decide if situation is serious.
- If others seem calm, we assume no emergency.

3. Evaluation Apprehension

- Fear of being judged by others.

Five Steps in Helping (Latané & Darley Model)

1. Notice the event

2. Interpret it as emergency
3. Take responsibility
4. Know how to help
5. Decide to help

Failure at any step → No helping behaviour.

Factors Reducing Bystander Effect

- Clear emergency situation
- Direct request for help
- Fewer bystanders
- Personal connection with victim
- Training (first aid, CPR)

Difference Between Pro-social Behaviour & Bystander Effect

Pro-social Behaviour	Bystander Effect
Focuses on helping actions	Focuses on failure to help
Positive social action	Social inhibition of helping
Motivated by empathy, norms	Influenced by presence of others

Short Conclusion

Pro-social behaviour promotes social welfare, while the bystander effect explains why people sometimes fail to help in emergencies. Understanding both helps improve social responsibility and intervention behaviour.