

COMPLIANCE AND OBEDIENCE – NOTES

1. Introduction

Human behaviour is influenced by social expectations. Two important forms of social influence are compliance and obedience.

Both involve following requests or commands, but they differ in *authority, pressure, and consequences.

PART A: COMPLIANCE

2. Meaning of Compliance

Compliance refers to changing one's behaviour in response to a direct request from another person.

The requester does not have authority; the person chooses to agree voluntarily (though sometimes under subtle social pressure).

Examples

Donating to charity after a volunteer request.

Buying a product because a salesperson persuades you.

3. Types of Compliance Techniques

Psychologists have identified strategies that increase the chances of compliance:

a) Foot-in-the-Door Technique

- * Small request → person agrees

- * Then a larger request is made

- * People comply to maintain consistency

- *Example:* Asking someone to sign a petition, then later asking for a donation.

b) Door-in-the-Face Technique

- * Large request → person refuses

- * Small request follows → they agree out of guilt / reciprocity

- *Example:* Asking for ₹1000 donation first, then lowering to ₹100.

c) Low-Ball Technique

* Attractive offer is made → person agrees

* Hidden costs or conditions added

Example: Cheap flight ticket shown first, then extra charges added later.

d) That's-Not-All Technique

* Before the person responds, the requester adds a bonus or discount

Example: “Buy this for ₹500 — but wait! I’ll add another item for free.”

e) Ingratiation

Using flattery or friendliness to increase compliance.

4. Factors Affecting Compliance

a) Reciprocity

People feel obligated to return favors.

b) Social Validation (Social Proof)

We comply when we see others doing the same.

c) Authority

People comply more when the requester appears knowledgeable or powerful.

d) Scarcity

Limited-time offers increase compliance.

e) Mood

People in a good mood tend to comply more.

