

**Social Networks**  
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**Cascading Behaviour in Networks**

**Lecture – 88**  
**Why do we Follow?**

So, we have just seen that yes we do follow. Now I would like to ask this question to you. Should we follow?

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Should we follow others? If everybody around me is going and jumping into a well. Should I also go and jump in the well? So, it is a very popular statement which is again and again used by your parents, when they do not want us to do something which all of our friends are doing. Let us take a more realistic example.

Let us say you are writing this math's exam.

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In a classroom, and the invigilator the teacher goes out for some five minutes. And everybody in this classroom gets a chance to cheat. So, you do not have enough time to copy and match the exact answers. But you have time to validate your answers. What is your final result? And everybody is going around and validating their answers with each other. But then there is this question number 4 whose concept you know really well. You have calculated it. And your answer is 40. And you are quite sure about it. Then when you go about to validate the answer to this question; your first friend says no my answer is 30. You go to your second friend; he says no my answer is 30 third friend 30, fourth friend 30 so on and so forth.

Then mostly, a time will come where you will cut off that 40 on your sheet and write a 30 there. So, it might not be good to follow others all the time. If it is not good to follow others then, why do we follow others?

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Before giving you answer to this question, I want to refine the definition of follow, not refine I want to explain in a little bit of more detail. What all kind of circumstances do you count in follow? Let us say my friend is doing something. I look at him he is doing this thing and I also start doing the same thing. It is a follow.

Let us say he is smoking cigarette. I looked at him, I feel smoking cigarette is cool. And I also start smoking cigarette, I followed him. Next my friend is using some product which is really nice. I looked at him, I like the product, I also started using it. Let us say an apple iPod; he is using an apple iPod, I liked it very much. I started using it, I followed him. A third kind of follow, rather a more involved a more intrinsic one is about the information we receive from other people. How information? My friend has information; which is of interest, some information which is of interest. It can be about a recent assignment we have to submit, it can be about news related to a Hollywood or Bollywood celebrity or something else some nice information.

So, when we I talk to my friends. He tells me about this information, I like the information, I believe in the information. This is also a kind of follow; I followed him.

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For example let us say last night; my friend watched this Kolaveri Di song. And he really liked it. Next morning he came to me; and told me why do not you watch this video, it is very nice. And I go ahead and I watch this video; and I also really liked it. So, I followed him. So, this is the definition of follow which we will be using. So, all these examples which I gave you come in the category of following.

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So, the question which we were addressing was, why do we follow each other. Like we looked at some examples where we saw that we should not every time we should not be

following each other's, then why human beings do intrinsically they follow each other? The answer is in these examples I am going to tell you.

First example, one of my friend, he is in a health care industry. And he has come up with some new kind of sport shoes; which have a lot of nice feature, is what he says. But then I might not find those features to be very nice. There are a lot of sport shoes which keep on coming in the market. And all of them have nice features why should I care about this one my friend came up with? But then one nice day, one fine day, my friend comes to me and he gives me an offer.

He says that Yayathi, if you take my sport shoes; if you look at my sport shoes you advertise it to 5 of your friends; I will give you one pair for free. Now my mind changes just advertising it to five people; and I am getting a pair of sport shoes no matter how bad it is. I will likely to do that, I will do that; I kind of followed him, I followed him for some explicit benefit for some monetary benefit. So, this kind of following we can say it is some explicit gain I am getting out of this following.

Let us look at some more scenarios. Why do we follow others? Agriculture let us say it is one of the most prominent occupations in India. There is this small village; and this in the small village is a small villager.

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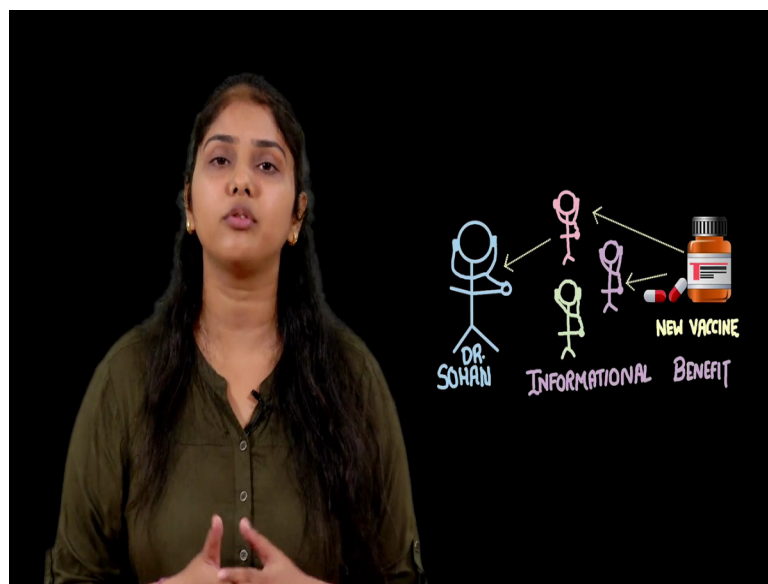


Let us say Sohan, Sohan does agriculture. Sohan has friends who do agriculture; Sohan has a very good friend. And one day suddenly sales of the crops of his friend doubles. And then Sohan is all very curious to know what happened in one day.

How come his sales doubled? And then Sohan goes and ask him. And his friend tells him, that he has imported he has got some imported hybrid seeds from America which makes his crop grow at a double pace. So, he has double the crops and hence he get better sales. How did Sohan get this information? So, Sohan will need to have some friends, whom he can follow, whom he can keep asking things? And then get to know of these nice things; like about these new seeds which we talked about. So, Sohan needs to follow to get useful information.

Let us talk about a different world another analogy. And this is the world of medical science. So, let us take our example; Sohan only and make him doctor Sohan here.

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So, now, doctor Sohan is here. Again he here needs to follow others, why? There is this very nice new vaccine which came in the market? And now the Sohan's patients can gain out of it.

So, it is Sohan's responsibility to be updated to keep talking to other doctors, to know what all is coming in the market. So, he follows other to get this useful information about the advances in the medical field. So, he needs to follow others. So, this is the second

reason why we follow other people to get useful information. And think not always useful, but mostly useful information we follow others to get this information. So, this kind of gain which we get out of following others is the informational gain.