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**Lecture Title**  
**Instinct-Definition, Characteristics and Their Training**  
**Academic Script**

Hello viewers. Welcome to the bachelor course of Psychology with Special Reference to Physical Education. Today we'll discuss about Instinct its characteristics and training.

**Instincts**

What are Instinctive Behaviors and do humans ever act out of instinct rather than their own will? **Instinct** or **innate behavior** is the inherent inclination of a living organism towards a particular complex behavior. The simplest example of an instinctive behavior is a fixed action pattern (FAP), in which a very short to medium length sequence of actions, without variation, are carried out in response to a clearly defined stimulus. **Instinct** is a term used to describe a set of behaviors that are both unlearned and set in motion as the result of some environmental trigger. Instincts are also often discussed in relation to motivation since they can also occur in response to an organism's need to satisfy some innate internal drive tied to survival.

Instincts are present across species and are consistent within individual species. In other words, many different species rely on instincts, and if one member of a species possesses an instinct, then they all do.

For more understanding lets watch the video

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Blk3RsxpNo>

**What is instinctive behavior?**

Instincts are defined as non-learned, inherited (genetic) patterns of behavior generally ensuring the survival of a species. Common examples include spinning a web by a spider, nest

building and other maternal activities, migration patterns of animals, social behavior in pack animals. Insects, animal courtship behaviors including monogamous mating, etc.

Like all animals, humans have instincts, genetically hard-wired behaviors that enhance our ability to cope with vital environmental contingencies. Jean Henri Fabre, an entomologist, considered instinct to be any behavior which did not require cognition or consciousness to perform.

Some behavioral scientists suggest that animals act out of instinct and humans out of will. However, the transfer of instincts from one generation to another is not well understood although it is assumed that somehow genes are involved.

Before we move into a discussion of specific types of instincts, it is important to distinguish the difference between an instinct and a reflex. Both are types of unlearned behavior that tend to serve a survival purpose. The difference is that a **reflex** is typically a simple reaction or a response to an environmental trigger whereas an instinct is a much more complex set of behaviors.

For instance, an example of a reflex would be when a baby turns his head toward an object that is pressed against one cheek in an effort to nurse. The head turn is a simple reactionary process. An instinct would be the manner in which a mother bird regurgitates her food to feed her young in response to their signals of hunger. Both are reactions to environmental cues; however, the mother bird must engage in a series of much more complex behaviors in order to respond to the cues the environment.

Instincts are inborn complex patterns of behavior that exist in most members of the species, and should be distinguished from reflexes, which are simple responses of an organism to a specific stimulus, such as the contraction of the pupil in response to bright light or the spasmodic movement of the lower leg when the knee is tapped.

An instinct is a hard-wired, inborn behavior that enables a human or animal to cope with its environment. An infant grasping an object placed in the palm of his hand, breathing, a spider spinning a web and a bird building a nest are all examples of instinctive behavior. Learned

responses are not instincts. Instincts help humans and animals avoid danger, form groups and even choose mates.

For more understanding lets watch the video

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z\\_CzXY-9wpo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_CzXY-9wpo)

## **Examples of Instincts**

Instinctual behavior has been identified across a wide variety of species. Instincts serve different purposes and show up at different points in development depending on the purpose each serves and the species within which it exists. In this section we will take a look at some of the more prominent instincts in both humans and non-humans and also examine the purpose behind each instinct.

### **Instinct Training:**

The role of instincts in determining the behavior of animals varies from species to species. The more complex the neural system of an animal, the greater is the role of the cerebral cortex and social learning, and instincts play a lesser role. A comparison between a crocodile and an elephant illustrates how mammals for example are heavily dependent on social learning. Lionesses and chimpanzees raised in zoos away from their birth mothers most often reject their own offspring because they have not been taught the skills of mothering.

Instinctive behavior goes beyond simple responses to an external stimulus. There is evidence that instinctive activity involves sequences of behavior that run a predictable course. The premise is that instinctive behavior is hereditarily based, but is also shaped by the forces of natural selection. Selection assumes that most of the outcomes of instinctive activity contribute to the preservation of an individual or to the continuity of the species; however, selection also involves the tendency to adapt to positive or negative changes in the environment that has implications for the individual's survival and ability to continue a line of brilliance.

Instinctive behavior is observed more frequently in primitive life forms while more complex mammals like humans depend mostly on learned (i.e. cerebral) behavior than instincts. However, human babies at birth instinctively exhibit: A sucking response for obtaining food, a

grasping response with hands exploring surroundings, crying to express pain, distress, and hunger, Noises and facial expressions conveying pleasure/happiness.

Ethnologists, like Konrad Lorenz who studies animal behavior, believe that every specie have routine movements that appear to be automatic in some way related to their structural systems. Lorenz's gave name for these patterns "Fixed Action Patterns" where particular characteristics are associated with the body's inherent physical structure and the adaptive functions of appendages.

Any behavior is instinctive if it is performed without being based upon prior experience (that is, in the absence of learning), and is therefore an expression of innate biological factors. Sea turtles, newly hatched on a beach, will automatically move toward the ocean. A kangaroo climbs into its mother's pouch upon being born. Honeybees communicate by dancing in the direction of a food source without formal instruction. Other examples include animal fighting, animal courtship behavior, internal escape functions, and the building of nests.

Some human primal instincts are like the instincts for food, water, survival, and love. We still have these instincts but they are suppressed because most of us live comfortable lives. We do have these instincts and they aren't as strong as they used to be because we have food every day, we can get water in places that we go often, we have places to stay because our parents provide one till we can provide ourselves. One of the primal instincts we have lost as we became civilized is probably something you have heard before and that is "kill or be killed" Some people have this primal instinct when they feel their life is in danger.

### **Primal Human Instincts**

Primal Human Instincts are:

#### **Sustenance**

- seek sweet and fatty (nutritious) food
- avoid eating smelly or bitter things
- be cautious about novel foods
- seek better resources than presently available

#### **Gender specific**

- love children and the cute (female more than male)
- compete for the best (and, for males, the most) partners (eg, show off, dress up)

### **Defense**

- blink; flinch; flee
- protect your own family
- obtain and defend resources: jobs, land, property,

### **Sociality**

- bond with your group, hangout with your family
- try to reduce conflict within your group (female more than male)
- compete for leadership in groups
- imitate others: beliefs, knowledge and skills

### **Know/ learn**

- be curious about stuff, make sense of things
- learn about your surroundings
- play with toys (objects, pets, tools, machines, etc)
- explore new places, find more efficient methods
- be more adventurous - especially when young

### **Talk**

- learn new words and more effective speech (especially the young)
- chitchat; commiserate; boast; scold; make jokes; entertain
- organize others' behavior; lead your fellows (male more than female)
- tell and listen to stories
- make music, make artistic objects

Instinct is frequently defined behavior that can range from or simple response to the subjects environment to high level of actions involving complex reflexes. Studies of White Sharks has proven that certain instinctive behaviors may be modified through learning, but most tend toward a narrow, predictable response.

