ART – THE MEANING AND FUNCTION OF ART

Art generally is a way of life. It is the power of doing anything. It means any skill, trade, craft or acquired expertise.

Technically it is the study and creation of things in forms, texture, lines and colour which gives pleasure to the mind and satisfies our sense of beauty. This is what is usually referred to as the Fine and Applied Art.

Divisions of Art

Art has two broad divisions. These are the Liberal Arts and the Creative Arts.

Liberal Art. Liberal Art embraces subject in the Humanities such as History and Literature and those of the Social Sciences such as mathematics and philosophy.

Creative Art. Creative Arts is divided into two forms. These are the Performing Arts and the Visual Arts. Performing Arts include Theatre Arts, and Music whereas Visual Art includes the Fine Arts and Applied Art. People who specialize in the performing arts i.e. those who entertain the audience with music, dances and drama are called artistes while those who specialize in the Visual Art, who make use of forms, symbols, lines and colours to communicate their ideas are called artists.

Functions of Art

The most important function of art is that it is the visual representation of human thoughts or feelings, in form of objects (natural or man-made), human being, animal and the landscape in general, that satisfy one's craving for the good.

Another function of art is that it is the expression of the characteristic of the people of an age or that it symbolizes an age, sect, or group of people. The cross, for example, is a work of art. Once you see somebody wearing it you will know that the person belongs to a certain group i.e. Christianity.

Another important function of art is to beautify ourselves, our homes and environment. All the fine coloured clothes worn by us are works of art and even the painting of faces and lips by the females. The furniture, all kinds of pictures that hang on our walls, decorated utensils, all add beauty to our homes. The houses in our villages and towns that are undergoing modern changes are architectural designs that really add beauty to our environment.

We also see all kinds of signboards and posters in our streets and homes. There are also books that have been written and published. They are meant to pass messages from persons or a group of persons to each other. In this way, art functions as a medium of communication. It also serves as a means of recording events.