The scope of education was very wide in ancient India. Knowledge of arts or skills was important part of it. There are many references about arts in texts like Ramayana, Mahabharata, Puranas and poetry. One can find very interesting description of arts in a text Nitisaar of Sage Shukracharya. According to him there are infinite numbers of arts but there are main sixty-four arts. The art can be mastered even by a dumb person.

These sixty-four arts are described in details in a text “Shivtatva Ratnakar” composed by Keldi Shri Basavrajendra. The list below describes the Sanskrit name of the art and its brief description.

1. Itihas-History
2. Aagam - Rituals
3. Kavya - Poetry
4. Alankar - Grammar of poetry
5. Natak - Dramatics
6. Gayaktva - Singing
7. Kavitva - Composition of poems
8. Kamashastra - Sex
9. Durohar / Dyuta - Gambling
10. Deshbhasha Lipidyan - Knowledge of scripts and languages of different countries.
11. Lipikarma - Script deciphering
12 Vachan - Reading
13 GaNak - Computation
14 Vyavahar - Behavioral etiquette
15 Swardynana - Phonetics
16 Shakun - Knowledge of Auspicious time and events
17 Samudrik - Palmistry
18 Ratnashastra - Gemology
19 GajaAshvaratha Kaushalya - Horse/Elephant riding
20 Mallashastra - Wrestling
21 Soopakarma - Cookery
22 Bhuhdohad - Gardening
23 Gandhavada - Perfumery
24 Dhatuvad - Metal purification
25 Rasasambandha - Khanivad - Chemical mining
26 Bilwad -
27 AgniSanstambha - Fire control
28 JalaSanstambha - Water control
29 Vachahstambhan - Voice control
30 Vayahstambhan - Age control
31 VashikaraN - Hypnotism
32 AakarshaN - Attraction
33 Mohan -
34 Viddveshan -
35 Uchattan - Extraction (thorn)
36 MaraN - Killing
37 Kalavanjan -
38 unknown-
39 Parakayapravesh-To enter into another person’s body
40 Padukasidhhi -
41 Vaksidhhi -Oretory
42 Gutikasidhhi-
43 Endrajalik-
44 Anjan - Ointment making
45 Pardrushtivanjan -
46 Swaraivanjan -
47 Manimantra Aushadik Sidhhi-
48 Chorkarm -Theft/ Stealing
49 Chitrakriya- Drawing
50 Lohakriya- Iron smithy
51 Ashmakriya- Stone working
52 Mrutkriya - Soil conditioning
53 Darukriya- Wood working
54 Venukriya- Bamboo works
55 Charmakriya- Leather works
56 Ambarkriya -Umbrella making
57 AddrushyakaraN -Vanishing things
58 DantikaraN -
59 Mrugayavidhi -Animal hunting
60 Vanijya - Commerce
61 Pashupalya- Animal keeping
62 Krushi- Agriculture
63 Asavkarma - Distillation
According to Jayamangal all arts can be grouped under two categories. The first category is arts related to sexology and other is arts related to techniques. Each category comprises of 64 arts. Many arts in both categories are same. The arts under first category can be divided into four groups.

A. Karmashraya: Work based - 24 arts
B. Dyutashraya: Gambling based - 20 arts
C. Shayanopacharika: Sleeping posture based - 16 arts
D. Uttarkala: Miscellaneous - 4 arts.

**A- Karmashraya (Work based group)**- The twenty-four arts under this group are listed below.

1. Geet: Singing
2. Nrutya: Dancing
3. Vadya: Playing musical instruments
4. Kaushal Lipidyann: Reading different scripts
5. Udarvachan: Give blessings
6. Chitravidhi: Painting
7. Pustakarm: Book binding
8. Patrachheda: Making leaf plates or cones for meals
9. Malyavidhi: Prepare garlands
10. Gandhayutsya swadavidhan: Cookery
11. Ratnapariksha: Gemology
12. Sivan: Sewing
13. Rangaparidyan: Colors
14. UpakaraNkriya: Making instruments
15 – Manavidhi - Measurements
16 - Ajivdyana
17 – Tiryagyonichikitsit -
18 - Mayakrutapashandparidyana
19 - Kridakaushal
20 - Lokadyana -
21 - VaichkshyaN
22 – Samvahan -
23 – Sharirsanskar -
24 – Vishesh Kaushalya

**B-Dyutashraya (Gambling based group)** – 20 arts. First 15 arts are Visual and remaining 5 are real arts.

1- Auuhprapti - Longevity
2 – Akshavidhan-
3- Roopsankhya
4- KriyamargaN-
5- BeejgrahaN-
6- Nayadynan-
7- KaraNadynan-
8- Chitrachitravidhi -
9- Gudharashi -
10 – Tulyabhihar-
11- KshipragrahaN
12 - Anupraptilekhsmruti
13 – Agnikarm-
14-Chalvyamohan-
15-Grahadan-
16-Upasthanvidhi-
17- Yuddha-War
18-Ruta
19-Gata-
20-Nrutta

**C-Shayanopacharika** *(Sleeping posture based group)* – 16 arts

1-Purush BhavkaraN-
2-Swaragaprakashan-
3-Pratyangdan-
4-Nakhadantvichar-
5-Nivistansan-
6-Guhyang Sansparshnanulomya
7-Parmartha Kaushal-
8-HarshaN
9-Samanarthakrutarthata
10-Anuprotsahan
11-Mrudukrodhapravartan-
13- Kruddhaprasadan
14-Suptaparityaga
15-Charamswapavidhi
16-Guhyadohan

**D- Uttarkala (Misc) group** – four arts

1-Sashrupat shapdan
2-Swashapathkriya
3-Prasthitanugaman
4-Punah PunmirishyaN

Shridharswami in his text “Bhagwat,(part 10, chapter 45 and verse 64) has mentioned more arts. But According to Nitisaar of Shukracharya

1-Geet -Singing
2- Vadya –Playing musical instruments
3-Nrutya- Dancing
4- Visheshakchhadya- Forhead decoration with paper, leaves etc.
6-Tandul-kusumabalivikar-use of colored rice grains and flower for worship.
7-PushpastaraN- Floral carpets
8-Dashnavsanangrag- Decaration of nails and body
9- Manibhumika karma-Floor decoration with pearls or precious stones.
10- Shayanrachana –Bed arrangement.
11-Udakvadya- Jalataranga-Series of water pots for creating music.
12-Udakaghat- Sprinkling with water cannons.
13-Chitrashycha yoga – Herbal preparations for weakening of enemy
14- Malyagranthanvikalpa-Preparation of floral garlands and hair bands
15-Shekarkapidyojan –Ladies hair styling.
16-Nepathyaprayog- Body make-up with cloth, ornaments and flowers.
17-KarNapatrabhanga- Ear ornaments preparation.
18- Gandhayuktì- Making scented dhupa.
19-BhushaNyojan-Ornamental make-up
20- Endrajal – Magic / mesmerism.
21-Kauchumaryog - Preparation of sex tonics.
22- Hastlaghav - Hand magic.
23- Vichitrashakayushbhakshyavikar kriya - Culinary preparations - sweets etc.
24- Panakrasa Ragasav yojan - Making sharbat or syrups.
25- Suchivan Karm - Needle work - Embroidery
26- Sutra krida - Hand puppets show
27- Veenadamruvadya - Playing musical instruments like veena or damru
28- Pahelika - Solving riddles.
29- Pratimala - An interesting style of reading text or poem.
30- Durvachakyog - Reciting text which is difficult to pronounce and understand.
31- Pustak Vachan - Book reading
32- Natakakhyalika darshan - Dramatics
33- Kavya Samasyapurti - Solving riddles.
34- Pattikavetrayanvikalpa - Furniture making.
35- Takshyakarm - Cutting wood to proper size and shape.
36- TakshyaN - Carpentry.
37- Vastuvidya - Civil engineering / architecture.
38- Roopyaratna Pariksha - Valuations of gems and coins.
39- Dhatuwad - Mixing of metals like brass.
40- Maniragakar Dyana - Identification of pearls and gems.
41- Vrukshauveda - Knowledge of Botany.
42- Meshkukktlavakyuddhavidhi - Knowledge of bird/ animal fighting for gambling.
43- Shukasarika Pralapan - training of bird to speak.
44. Utsadan-Samvahan-Keshmardankaushal - Body massage and hair care.
45. Akshyarmushti kathan - Secret word codes for communication or Mushti sanket - Secret communication through fingers (used by traders in auctions).
46. Mlenchhit Vikalpa - Secret communication through gestures.
47. Deshbhasha vidyan – Knowledge of foreign languages.
49. Nimittadyana – Knowledge of auspicious date and time for a particular work.
50. Yantramatrika - Knowledge of instruments or machines
51. DharaNmatruka - Remembering heard sentences.
52. Sampathy-
53. Manasi Kavya Kriya – To complete incomplete poem or its part.
54. Abhidhankosha-
55. Chandodyan
56. Kriyakalpa – Poetry forms
57. Chalitak Yog – Conceal body or speech.
58. Vastragopan – covering parts of body with cloth.
59. Dhyutavishesh-
60. Aakarsh kriya - Playing with dices.
61. Balakridanak
62. Vainayiki dyna – Behavior with known and unknown persons.
63. Vaijayiki Dynan – Knowledge of victory.
64. Vyayam – Physical exercise.
Jaymangal has described these arts in details.

According to sage Shukracharya the various arts are known not by its name but its expression. The cast name is sometimes associated with the art of artist. The first art is dancing. This contains physical expressions with motion.

1-Dancing- This art is of two types i.e. Natya and Anatya. Behavioural representation of men and women is termed as Natya and other form is Anatya. The art of dancing was very advanced. Tandavnrutya of God Shankara is famous. Dancing of peacocks during rainy season is worth seeing. Dancing is natural expression when one is overwhelmed with some sort pleasure. This art was developed into different forms by the experts. Dancing is common in both civilized and un-civilized societies. In western countries the art has a social status.

In ancient day knowledge of this art was considered essential for price or princess. This art is maintained in South India in its original form. Artists like Shri Udayshankar are trying to revive this art. Dance teaching by Arjuna to princess Uttara (daughter of king Virata) is mentioned in the epic Mahabharata.

2-Vadan- The knowledge of playing a musical instrument is an art. There are four types of musical instruments.

1. Tat – String instruments-VeeNa, Tambora, Sarangi, Bela, Sarod etc
2. Sushir- Instrument with hallow part inside-Flute, Shahnai, Harmonium, Conch etc.
3. Avanaddha- Instrument clad with leather-Dhol, Nagara, Mrudang, Daf, Khanjari etc
4. Ghan-Instruments with striking parts- Zhanz, Manjira, Clapping etc
Musical instruments enhance the singing music. VeeNa was main instrument in ancient India. Ancient texts mention playing of VeeNa by Goddess Saraswati and Sage Narada, Flute of God Shrikrishna, and Damaru of God Mahadeo. There are many Sanskrit texts related to musical instruments describing preparation and maintenance and standard dimensions. Musical instruments were played during auspicious occasions and festivals. Instruments were also played for marching army.

3- **Dresses and ornaments** - To assist men and women with proper dress and ornaments is an art.

4- **Costumes and make up** – To change the personal appearance by suitable costumes is also an art. Hanuman met Sita in the attire of a Brahmin.

5- **Setting and decorating the bed**- In this art the bed is decorated with different bed sheets and covered with flowers and garlands.

6- **Gambling** - This art was for entertainment of men. The gambling was of different types and played with dices. As per Mahabharata Nala, Yudhishtir and Shakuni was expert in this art.

7- **Sex play**  – According to Gandharva Veda knowledge of different positions is also an art.

8- **Distillation** –Preparation of wines or medicinal liquids was an art.

9- **Surgery**  -extraction of thorn etc, dressing of wounds was an art.

10- **Cookery**- Use of various spices for food preparation is art. King Nakul and Bhim were experts in this art.
11- Horticulture - The art involves plantation of trees, creepers, etc., for fruits and flowers. Ancient texts like Vishnudharmottar puran, Agnipuran and Nitisaar give detailed information on this art.

12 - Mining - Extraction for stones, metal, separation of metals, preparation of metallic powders, etc., is an art.

13 - Sugar making - Making sugar from juice of sugar cane, beetroot is an art. The product can be in different form such as jaggery, raw sugar, crystalline sugar, etc.

14 - Gold smithy - Preparation of gold and silver ornaments is an art.

15 - PruthakkaraN (Analysis) - Art to separate different metals.

16 - Apurva vidynan - Making alloys by combination of different metals.

17 - Lavan kriya - Salt making - Art of making salt from water from sea, lakes or rock, etc.

The last ten arts are related to modern botany, mining, metallurgy, and chemistry.

18 - Marshal arts - It involves balancing of legs and use of weapons in dual fight.

19 - Mallayudhha - Wrestling - In wrestling the person attacks on hands or legs of the opponent. This art was very famous in India. Ancient texts mention the famous wrestlers such as Jarasana, Bhima, Kans, and Shrikrushna, etc.

According to sage Shukracharya, on who is defeated in wrestling, one goes to hell and war should continue till the end of enemy. Ancient text Sapatashati (1-92 to 84) describes a sea war between Lord Vishnu and demon Madhukaitabha, which lasts for 5000 years.
20-Nipidan-Physical attacking – It involves sudden attack on the un-alert enemy. It is also used in self defense.

21-Astra – Throwing weapons on enemy- In modern wars guns and missiles are used.

22-Yuddha- Strategic planning – It involves movement of army laid on horses and elephants. Five arts numbered from 18 to 22 are related to Dhanurveda (Archery).

23 Hastamudra- Arrangement of hand fingers- This art was to please gods and also to attain physical and mental power and treatment of body ailments. There are as many 32 arrangement described in Sanskrit texts on Tantra and Aagams. Modern hypnotists also use some such arrangement of fingers.

24-Sarathhya- Driving the horse driven chariots was an art. Driving horse or elephant was essential for princes. Mahabharat describes Lord Krishna driving chariot of Arjuna and King Shalya driving chariot of KarNa.

25-Pot Making- Artisans of ancient period were expert in making pots from clay, wood and brass etc. Museums display such artifacts found during archeological excavations from various sites

26- Drawing and Painting – Paintings at ancient temples and Buddhist caves indicate the high level of skill developed by the painters. The paints used appear as still fresh. These paintings attract large foreign tourists. To decorate walls of house, use of paintings was very common. Women too were expert in paining on wall and floors. Chitralekha, the friend of princess Usha (daughter BaNasur) used to draw portrait of person seen only once.

There are six things involved in this art namely;

1. Roopbhed-Mixing of colors to get the correct shade.
ii. PramaN - Use of a scale to show depth and distances within a painting.
iii. Bhav - Expression on face.
iv. Sadrushhya - Similarity.
v. VarNika - Color composition and
vi. Bhang - The posture (to enhance the figure).

The texts “Samarangan Sutradhar” and other describe this art in details.

**27-Levelling of ground** - For construction of Temples, palaces, lakes etc, the ground has to be leveled.

**28 Preparation of time measuring instruments** - In ancient period time was measured with Jalayantra, Sand clock, sun-dial etc. With the invention of mechanical clocks earlier ancient types have become obsolete. Only few astrologers use for special occasions such as marriages or know sunrise and sun set times.

**29- Preparation of musical instruments** -

**30-Rangakarma** - Dyeing of cloth - This art was a house hold art earlier but nowadays dyeing is done by dyers. Many expert dyers of Rajasthan can dye the two sides of a fine cloth with different colors. Tie and dye work (Bandhani) is a skillful art mastered by dyers of Rajasthan.

**31-Jalavayuagni Sanyog** - Combination of water, air and fire to control steam

Ancient text Samarangan Sutradhar by King Bhoja contains a chapter 31 entitled as Yantravidhan (Machines). The chapter contains 224 verses describing various machines. This indicates that Indians in ancient period were using various machines for day to day works.

**32-Ratha Nauka Nirman** - Initially the means of transport was carts. Subsequently boats and ships were made for water transport. Use of ships is
Sixty-four arts of ancient India

mentioned in Veda. Water transport to various countries was popular but with the rise of British Empire in India this art vanished.

33 - **RajjukaraN** – Rope making with the fibers of hemp jute etc.

34- **Patbandha**- Cloth weaving –This art was very advanced in India. Prior to East India company’s arrival, weaving of extra fine cloth was known to local weavers. But foreign traders destroyed this art to promote their industries.

35- **Ratnaparikshya**- Gemology- Identification of various gems, polishing and making holes is a art. People in India wear precious stones in rings or bracelet to protect themselves from bad effects of some planets as per astrology.

36- **Gold smithy** –This art involves assessment of purity of gold or silver.

37- **Artificial jewelry making**- an art of making ornaments using artificial metals and stones.

38- **SwarNadyalankarkruti** –Gold smithy involving making gold and silver ornaments and gold plating on other metals.

39 - **Mardavadikriya**- It is an art of softening of raw leather for further uses.

40- **Pashucharmangnirharkriyadynan**- It is an art of separating skin of a dead animal without damage.

41- **Dairy work** -Making curd , butter and Ghee from milk is also an art.

42- **Kanchukadi siwan** – Tailoring or stitching the cloth is an art.

43- **JalataraN**- Swimming also includes life saving of drowning person.
44-Bandasamarjan – Cleaning the household utensils used in cooking or for serving food.

45-Vastrasamarjan – Washing clothes and repairing.

46 – Khurkarm – Shaving and hair cutting.

47-Oil extraction - Extraction of oil from oil seeds and fatty oil from animal flesh.

48- Palaung - an agricultural land is an art.

49 – Tree climbing – It needs a skill to climb high trees for collecting fruits.

50-Manokul sewa- It is an art to serve other persons with pleasing manners. Servants and students should know this skill.

51-VenutruNadi Kriya - Bamboo works- Bamboo and grass are abundantly available natural material. To make baskets, mats, roof covers from bamboo and grass is an art.

52- Glassware making – To make glass articles such as bangles, lamp shades is art.

53-Sanchetan – It deals with irrigation of agriculture fields.

54-SamharaN - It deals with drainage of excessive water from fields.

55- Iron smithy- It deals with fabrication of iron implements for agricultural or domestic uses.

56-PalyaN kriya- It deals with saddle making for horse or elephant riding.

57 Samrakshyan and 58 Poshan - Baby care- To look after the physical and mental growth of a child.
59-Toy making – This art involves preparation of toys considering the age of the child.

60-Sayuktatadan- Punishing the guilty persons with appropriate punishment is also an art.

61- Handwriting – Ancient texts were copied by manual hand writing. Huge texts such as Mahabharata, with more than 125000 verses, are written in same size of letters without any correction and the pages are free from dirty spots. With modern discovery of type writers and printing presses, people are neglecting this art.

62-Preservation of beetle leaves - Experts can preserve leaves for months by reshuffling daily.

63-Aadan – It is an art doing a job quickly

64-Pratidan- It is an art doing a job for a long period with the same quality. The last two arts are very important in present era.

Authors concluding remarks- Sixty-four ancient Indian arts are described in this article. The extent of this subject is very wide. It should also include 32 Vidyas (techniques) described in a separate article in the same issue of this magazine. The aim of education should be increase of knowledge, betterment of personal relations and more earning for the livelihood. The ancient education system was to fulfill the four basic duties of a person, Dharma (Religion), Artha (Earning), Kama (Family life) and Mokshya (Attainment of eternal peace). Lord Krishna was master of all the sixty-four arts. Arjun in Dance, Bhim in cookery and Parshram and Dronacharya were expert in archery. Due to modern education system a person has to perform any job available to him. This leads to class struggle and unemployment. All human are not same. Some people are inclined to some particular subject.
Sage Shuracharya mentions that “It is easy to learn and master traditional (family) skill than acquire new skill”.

A son of a carpenter is able to learn carpentry skill much better than other person because he is familiar since childhood the intricacies of the trade. Ancient education system was base on this psychological principle.

Modern educationists are realizing the lacuna of modern education system. But we are blindly following their system which creates a hatred towards own trade. Sons of artisans are after low salary office jobs. It would be better if we follow our ancient system of education.

***.***