SEVEN STAR INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL BANI

English Core 11th

Time : 1 Hrs. Max marks : 50

1 Read the following passage carefully. [10]

The Great Library of Alexandria, situated in Egypt, was once the most significant centre of learning in the ancient world. Founded in the 3rd century BCE, it is believed to have housed up to 400,000 scrolls covering subjects like astronomy, mathematics, medicine, philosophy and literature. Scholars from across Greece, India, Persia and Egypt visited the library, drawn by its reputation for intellectual wealth and cultural exchange.

The vision behind the Library was not just to collect knowledge but to gather all the world's written works in one place. To achieve this, ships arriving at the Alexandria port were searched for books, which were then copied the originals often kept and the copies returned. This ambition made the library a true marvel of its time.

However, the library's fate remains a mystery. Over several centuries, it suffered multiple incidents- wars, fires and political upheavals-that contributed to its decline. One of the most notable events often linked to its destruction is Julius Caesar's siege of Alexandria in 48 BCE, during which a fire may have damaged part of the collection. Later, religious and political conflicts further eroded what remained.

What makes the story of the Library of Alexandria tragic is not just the physical loss of the building but the immeasurable loss of human knowledge. Countless works-possibly from thinkers whose names we may never know-vanished forever. Unlike Pompeii, which was preserved by disaster, the Library was slowly dismantled by time and turmoil.

Today, the library stands as a symbol-not of what remains but of what was lost. Modern institutions like the Bibliotheca Alexandrina in Egypt strive to revive the spirit of learning that the ancient library once represented. The legacy of the Library of Alexandria reminds us that the survival of knowledge depends as much on preservation as on creation.

The loss of the Library also highlights the vulnerability of human knowledge to conflict, neglect and shifting priorities. In times of war or political instability, the preservation of culture often takes a backseat, The scrolls, written on delicate papyrus, were susceptible not only to fire but also to decay over time. Without proper conservation or the will to protect them, even the greatest collections can vanish The gradual decline of the Library serves as a cautionary tale about the fragility of human achievement in the face of indifference and destruction.

Despite the uncertainty surrounding its exact fate, the legend of the Library of Alexandria continues to inspire modern scholars and historians. It fuels ongoing efforts to digitise ancient manuscripts, preserve indigenous languages and create open-access repositories of scientific and literary knowledge. In this way, the spirit of Alexandria endures not through its physical remains but through the continued global pursuit of wisdom and the belief that no knowledge should ever be permanently lost.

Based on your understanding of the passage, answer the following questions.

(i) What central idea is conveyed through the story of the Library of Alexandria? (2)

(ii) What was one unique method the library used to expand its collection? (1)

(a) Buying scrolls only from royal collections
(b) Copying books from visiting ships
(c) Sending messengers to burn enemy books
(d) Collecting oral tales from travelers