Skimming and scanning are essential strategies needed for readers at the tertiary level. Skimming is a strategy which is useful for the readers to achieve the following:

- To get the gist of a passage
- To have a superficial content of the reading matter

Scanning is a strategy that can be used to help the readers achieve the following:

- To find out answers for specific questions from the given reading passage
- To look for specific information from the text

Read the passage given below to answer the questions given below

Passage – 1 Exploring the possibilities of m-learning

Mobile phones have become an integral part of student life. It allows sharing of text, music, videos, and gives access to the Internet. But can mobile phones be used for learning? M-learning is all about exploring the possibilities of using mobile phones for this purpose.

The world has already seen e-learning through personal computers and the Internet.

M-learning may just be an additional service which enables institutes to use their students' cellphones as a tool to impart education.

Indian students spend around $1.7 billion annually just preparing for tests. Institutes that train students for entrance exams such as IIT-JEE, CAT and the bank exam, conduct a lot of mock tests. The test prepared by these institutes may be loaded on cellphones from a website and could be taken from anywhere.

Non-governmental organisations working to train rural youth in English language may benefit from m-learning. Small audio/video lessons in English that could be loaded on the phones would be of great help to students. It will enable the rural youth to learn the language while travelling or working because many of them cannot afford to learn in a classroom.

A small mobile application may be used to load the test with objective-type questions on the mobile. Once the test is taken, the results may be submitted to a centralised website through an SMS. The institutes can access these results instantly. Evaluation time during campus recruitment can be significantly reduced by this method.

Programming the mobile devices is key to m-learning. Most of the phones from Nokia, Samsung and Sony Ericsson support Java2 Micro Edition platform. A J2ME application written should work on any of these phones. Also, more and more device manufacturers are tuning to Android.

Android phones are now available for less than Rs. 5,000. J2ME and Android applications may be developed in Java though they are two different technologies. However, the application for iPhone needs to be developed in a language called Objective C.

Students can be provisioned with the content in multiple ways. Institutes can provision the content through Bluetooth, or by SMS-ing the URL from where the application may be downloaded to the mobile phone using GPRS. The application may be loaded into an SD card sent to the student through courier. The tests may be loaded from the SD card and replaced once taken. Institute will probably have to support all these delivery mechanisms to successfully take up m-learning for their students.   (The Hindu)

Questions

1) What do you mean by m-learning in general?
2) How far m-learning will be useful to the students?
3) Comment on the usefulness of m-learning for the test takers.
4) Explain how mobile technology can be used to impart education to the students?
5) What is the major argument put forth by the writer of the article?

Read the passage and answer the questions given below the passage.

Passage – 2 Buildings as 'weapons of mass destruction'

More people have been killed by earthquakes in Asia this past century than in all previous years put together, with India and Pakistan together accounting for over 2,00,000 deaths after 1900, says a paper in *Science* .

And this staggering loss of life in the two countries owes to "the fragility of construction methods introduced there in the past century," says the paper provocatively titled 'Buildings as Weapons of Mass Destruction.'

The "spontaneous collapse" of multi-storey structures is getting all too frequent in South Asia's major cities, and the "shoddy construction" could be attributable to "poverty and ignorance, or to covert avoidance of building codes" by contractors, say the authors Roger Bilham of the Department of Geological Sciences, University of Colorado, USA and Vinod Gaur of the Centre for Mathematical Modelling and Computer Simulation, Bangalore.

Earthquake-resistant design codes in these countries are often only applied to civic structures, ignoring dwellings, it adds. "Deaths from future earthquakes could be vastly reduced, with no additional scientific input, were governments to enforce existing construction codes," add the geophysicists who had, a decade ago in *Science* predicted a "great Himalayan earthquake." "Conversely, the development of improved estimates of seismic risk will be futile if governments permit unauthorized and unsound construction practices to continue."

But the creation and enforcement of earthquake-resistant building codes poses a big challenge in terms of data collection, and could take "many decades to complete."

The seismologists, who have often expressed their scepticism over the proposed nuclear power plant at Jaitapur however state that "by far the greatest risk from earthquakes in south Asia is currently not from its nuclear facilities but from its fragile dwellings that will collapse in quite modest future shaking."

A major earthquake appears to prompt revisions to seismic risk maps of India and Pakistan, thereby "endorsing a perception of increased seismic risk in the region of a recent earthquake." While revising the hazards maps is indeed desirable, the authors drive home the point that in light of the seismic history of most of the region being short, such revisions may not serve the desired purpose. Even if India's historical record were to be known, it may not be a "reliable key to its seismic future."

The reasoning for this is that, the loading and unloading of stress on a continental scale has completely changed in recent years. While there has been some unloading of stress in the north due to groundwater withdrawal, there has been a concomitant increase in the south in the form of reservoirs. While these loading changes are small, they could end up proving "fatal because they act on a system close to failure," they warn.

"There are several unknowns in terms of seismic vulnerability," Prof Gaur told The Hindu. "But the location of critical facilities must be subject to specific site investigations targeted at reducing these uncertainties. Large critical facilities, must be designed to withstand the maximum credible earthquake."

While populations in the Himalayas "face a clear risk" from great earthquakes in the future, even a moderate earthquake in the continental collision zone (where the Arabian and Indian Plates collide with the southern margin of the Eurasian plate) would "threaten a far greater population." This tectonic collision zone — comprising Iran, Afghanistan, Pakistan, India, Nepal, Bhutan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, and Myanmar — accounts for a quarter of the world's population, says the paper.   (The Hindu)

Questions

   I Select the response which best reflects the meaning of the text.

   1) The two major countries affected severely by earth quake are
        a) India and Sri Lanka b) India and USA c) India and Pakistan
   2) The reason for the collapse of buildings in South Asia is due to
        a) Public b) Engineers c) Contractors
   3) Death rate caused by earth quake can be reduced in future by
        a) Enforcing construction codes b) discouraging the construction of multi-storey buildings c) ensuring better medical facilities
   4) According to seismologists, casualties are more because of

a) Nuclear power plants b) badly constructed houses c) bad weather conditions

II Select the definition which best reflects the meaning of the word as it is used in the text.

1) Fragile
    a) Weak
    b) Firm
    c) Strong
    d) Stiff
2) Scepticism
    a) Terror
    b) Apprehension
    c) Opinion
    d) Argument
3) Prompt
    a) Immediate
    b) Slow
    c) Negligent
    d) Intelligent

4) Concomitant
    a) Happening at the same time
    b) Synonymous
    c) Naturally accompanying
    d) Confirm