## ACTIVE AND PASSIVE VOICE

195. Compare:-

1. Rama helps Hari.

2. Hari is helped by Rama.

It will be seen that these two sentences express the same meaning.

But in sentence I, the form of the Verb shows that the person denoted by the subject does something.

Rama (the person denoted by the subject) does something.

The Verb helps is said to be in the Active Voice.

In sentence 2, the form of the Verb shows that something is done to the person denoted by the Subject.

Something is done to Hari (the person denoted by the Subject.)

The Verb helped is said to be in the Passive Voice.

Def.- A verb is in the Active Voice when its form shows (as in sentence 1) that the person or thing denoted by the Subject does something ; or, in other words, is the doer of the action.

The Active Voice is so called because the person denoted by the Subject acts.

Def.- A Verb is in the Passive Voice when its form shows (as in sentence 2) that something is done to the person or thing denoted by the Subject.

The Passive Voice is so called because the person or thing denoted by the Subject is not active but passive, that is, suffers or receives some action.

Def.- Voice is that form of a Verb which shows wherther what is denoted by the Subject does something or has something done to it.

Note the change from the Active Voice to the Passive Voice in the following sentences:-

### Active Voice

1. Sita loves Savitri.
2. The mason is building the wall.
3. The peon opened the gate.
4. Some boys were helping the wounded man.

### Passive Voice

1. Savitri is loved by Sita.
2. The wall is being built by the mason.
3. The gate was opened by the peon.
4. The wounded man was being helped by some boys.

### Active Voice

1. He will finish the work in afortnight.
2. Who did this?
3. Why did your brother write such a letter?

### Passive Voice

1. The work will be finished by him in a fortnight.
2. By whom was this done?
3. Why was such a letter written by your brother?

It will be noticed that when the Verb is changed from the Active Voice to the Passive Voice, the Object of the Transitive Verb in the Active Voice becomes the Subject of the Verb in the Passive Voice.

[Thus in sentence 1, Savitri which is the object of loves in the Active Voice, becomes the Subject of is loved in the Passive Voice.]

Since the Object of a verb in the active voice becomes the Subject of the passive form, it follows that only Transitive Verbs can be used in the Passive Voice, because an Intransitive Verb has no Object.

196. The passive voice is formed with the suitable tense of the verb be followed by the past participle. Study this table:

### Tense (or Modal + base) -- Active Voice -- Passive Voice

Simple present -- take, takes -- am taken, is taken, are taken.

Present continuous -- am taking, is taking, are taking -- am being taken, is being taken, are being taken

Present perfect -- has taken, have taken -- has been taken, have been taken

Simple past -- took -- was taken, were taken

Past continuous -- was taking, were taking -- was being taken, were being taken

Past perfect -- had taken -- had been taken

Simple future -- will take, shall take -- will be taken, shall be taken

Can / may / must, etc. + base -- can take, must take -- can be taken must be taken

197. Students must know when to use the Active Voice and when Co use the Passive : the ability to change the Active Voice into the Passive and vice versa is not sufficient.

The Active Voice is used when the agent (i.e., doer of the action)

preferred when the active form would involve the use of an indefinite or vague pronoun or noun (somebody, they, people, we, etc.) as subject ; that is, when we do not know the agent or when it is clear enough who the agent is.

My pen has been stolen. (Somebody has stolen my pen.)

I was asked my name. (They asked me my name.) ;

English is spoken all over the world. (People speak English all over the world.)

I have been invited to the party. (Someone has invited me to the party.)

We will execute all orders promptly. (All orders will be executed promptly.)

In such cases the agent with by is usually avoided.

Note, however, that, as in the examples given earlier, the fly-phrase cannot be avoided where the agent has some importance and is necessary to complete the sense.