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STUDY MATERIAL SCIENCE CLASS-VII

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► **Fibres & Fabrics**

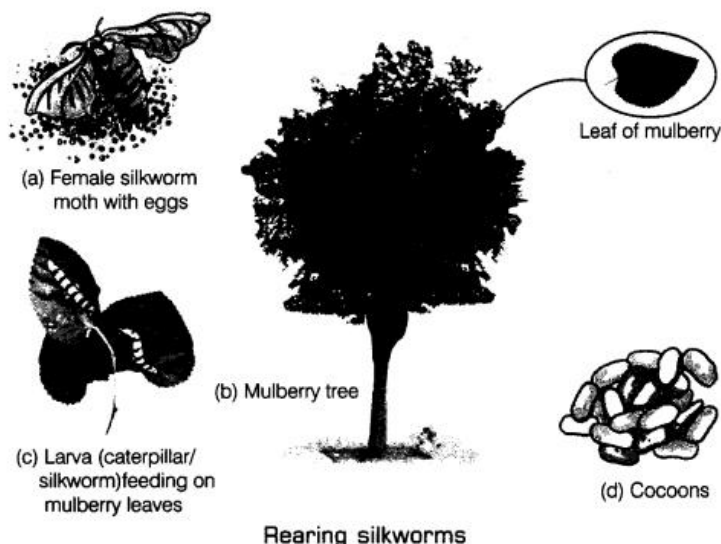
From Cocoon to Silk

For obtaining silk, silk moths are reared and their cocoons are collected to get silk thread.

Rearing Silkworms

A female silk moth lays hundred of eggs at a time. The eggs are stored carefully on strips of paper or cloth and sold to silkworm farmers. The farmers keep eggs under hygienic condition. They warm them to a suitable temperature for the larvae to hatch from egg.

The larvae are kept in clean bamboo trays along with young and freshly chopped mulberry leaves. After 25-30 days, the silkworms stop eating and start spinning the cocoons. Small racks or twigs may be provided in the trays to which cocoons get attached.



Processing Silk

The cocoons are collected and boiled in water to kill the insect inside them. The resulting fibre is known as raw silk. The silk fibres separate out.

Reeling the Silk

The process of taking out fibres from the cocoon for use as silk is known as reeling the silk. Reeling is done in special machines. Silk fibres are spun into silk threads which are woven into silk cloth by weavers.

Discovery of Silk

The discovery of silk was made in China a long time back. According to an old Chinese legend, the empress Si-tung-Chi was asked by the emperor Huang-ti to find the cause of the damaged leaves of mulberry trees growing in their garden. The empress found white worms eating up mulberry leaves. She also noticed that they were spinning shiny cocoons around them. Accidentally, a cocoon dropped into her cup of tea and a tangle of delicate threads separated from the cocoon. Silk industry began in China and was kept a closely guarded secret for hundreds of years. Later on, traders and travellers introduced silk to other countries. The route they travelled is still called the 'silk route'.

Even today, China leads the world in silk production. India is also among the leading silk producing countries of the world. In India, a large number of women are engaged in various activities related to the silk product such as the rearing of silkworms, reeling of silk from cocoons and processing of raw silk into fabrics.