

FROM COCOON TO SILK

Production of silk from silk moths involves the following steps.

Step 1 : Eggs of silk moth are stored carefully on strips of cloth and sold to the silk moth farmers.

Step 2 : The eggs are kept by the farmers under hygienic conditions under controlled temperature and humidity until the caterpillars come out of the shell.

Step 3 : The silk moth caterpillars are kept in bamboo trays and fed with freshly chopped mulberry leaves.

Step 4 : When the caterpillars stop eating, these are shifted to rearing chambers provided with small racks, twigs. Here, the caterpillars spin cocoons.

Inside the cocoon, the pupa continues growing.

- Step 5** : At the end of pupal stage, the moth cuts the cocoon and flies out.
- Step 6** : The cocoons are then sorted out according to their colour, size, shape and texture.
- Step 7** : The sorted cocoons are collected, and immersed in boiling water to kill the insect inside them.
- Step 8** : The cocoons are given a series of hot and cold immersions. This makes the silk-gum soft.
- Step 9** : The silk filaments are separated from the cocoons. This process is called **reeling of the silk**. The resulting fibre is known as **raw silk**. It can be dyed into various colours.
- Step 10** : Silk fibres are then spun to get silk threads. Silk threads are woven to get silk cloth.

Uses of Silk

Silk fibre is used for weaving silk cloth. Silk cloth is a high-value material.