

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature:

2.1. Silk

According to the scientific definition of silk, the fluid proteins secreted by the silkworm caterpillar are silk [1, 2]. To prolong their lives, they consume their particular food plants and create cocoons, which also act as a protective shell for them [2, 3]. The four phases of silkworm are egg, caterpillar, pupa, and moth [4]. The process of unfolding the cocoons into a continuous strand and weaving results in the production of silk [4].

Silk is referred to as the ‘queen of textiles’ because of its shine, quality, soft touch, and glamour [5]. It is in demand for high-fashion clothing. Since insects produce silk fiber, it is an animal fiber. It is considered the only natural fiber made of protein found in filament form [6]. The mechanical properties of silk are strength, extendability, and compressibility [7, 8]. Silk is found to be useful in many applications because of its qualities like firmness, flexibility, softness, receptiveness to dyes, and adaptation to different forms of twisting [9, 10]. Due to these qualities, silk continues to be regarded as one of the premier textile materials [11]. Silk continues to reign supreme in the field of luxury clothes and a variety of other high-quality products, even though synthetic fibers are less difficult and less expensive to manufacture [11, 12]. In addition to its natural beauty, its incredible comfort in warm weather made it an ideal material for fashionable clothing [13]. Due to the aforementioned factors, researchers are curious about the synthetic production of silk fibers.

2.2. Sericulture

The rearing of silkworms for cocoon formation, that are the basic requirement for making silk, is termed sericulture [14]. It also includes the cultivation of plants for the silkworms to eat, which are further spun into cocoons, and the reeling of these cocoons to open the filaments for value addition such as processing and weaving. Archaeological evidence of silk dates to the Yangshao period, which lasted from 5000 to 10,000 BCE; however, Confucian texts from 2700 BCE are credited with the invention of silk manufacturing [15-18]. In the first half of the first century AD, it was already being practiced in ancient Khotan, and by 140 AD, it had made its way to India [13]. Later, it spread to countries in Europe, the Mediterranean, and other parts of Asia. As time went on, sericulture became a significant cottage industry in many countries, including China,

Japan, India, Korea, Brazil, Russia, Italy, and France [13]. China and India are the largest producers of silk, accounting for 90 percent of the global supply [13, 19].

Sericulture in India, with manufacturing and trading, is considered to have begun in the 15th century [20]. India accounts for many species of silk moth fauna, making it one of the 34 mega bio-diversities worldwide. Along with tradition, Sericulture is also a living culture. It falls in both the cottage and small-scale sectors. Farmers, entrepreneurs, and artisans based in rural areas are ideally suited for this opportunity, as it offers high returns on modest investments [21]. It provides employment opportunities for farmers, small landowners, and marginalized and weaker sectors of society. In rural as well as semi-urban areas of India, the sericulture sector employs more than 8.7 million people. The success of the country's silk industry can be attributed in part to the local market, which is known for selling silk garments with distinctive regional designs. [21, 22].

Assam is regarded with pride in the northeastern Indian states for its long history of artistic handloom goods. This area is home to a remarkably diverse collection of tribal cultures [23, 24]. Assam is well known all over the world for its superior-quality silk production. Assam's tribal and non-tribal communities produce exquisite handwoven silk products that highlight people's creative ability and sensitivity to aesthetic beauty in color and design [24]. The textiles reflect the socio-cultural life of the communities. Traditional textiles made from these silks are renowned for their high level of craftsmanship, vivid color, and sturdiness [24]. Not only is sericulture suitable for use as a socioeconomic platform, but it also contributes to the improvement of the economies of weaker sections of society [25, 26].

2.3. Assam Silk: *Eri*, *Muga* and *Pat*

Silk is mainly divided into mulberry (*Pat*) and non-mulberry (*Eri*, *Muga*, etc.) [27]. Mulberry silk is the most popular and exclusively studied silk. India produces all the major commercial varieties of silk. Silk filament is known to consist of fibroin protein (72–81%) and sericin protein (19–28%) [28, 29]. For its shine, *Muga* silk, warm *Eri* silk, and white or off-white *Pat* silk, Assam holds a significant place in the world [30]. For decades, the entire region of North East India has relied on Assam's silk industry as a source of income [31]. The majority of Assam's silk output is exported, but it is also sold domestically and internationally [32]. When it comes to handloom weaving and the

production of natural silk, Assam is the most prominent state in the country. Since the beginning of time, Assam has become well-known throughout the world for producing and manufacturing goods made of fine silk. Weavers are compelled to pay this money simply because they have no other option [33].

Eri is cultured, especially in Assam and its neighboring states. It has the insulating properties of *Eri* wool, making it special. Assam contributes to 65% of *Eri* production in India [34, 35], followed by Meghalaya and Nagaland in the northeastern region. The British referred to this silk as Palma Christi silk. Heavy garments known as "*Bor Kapoor*" were woven from *Eri* silk. *Eri* silkworms are multivoltine [36]. The cocoons produced by *Eri* silkworms are open-ended and are used for spinning purposes only [34, 37]. Cocoon filaments are typically not uniform or even, unlike *Pat* silk's continuous filament. *Eri* cultivation does not just involve the production of silk; it also involves the production of protein-rich pupae, which are considered a delicacy in the northeastern region of India [34, 36, 37].

Muga is specific to Assam and contributes 95% [38], which adds to its royalty and uniqueness. *Muga* has been associated with the state of Assam since ancient times, and it is now emerging as a trend in the world of fashion. Although it is unclear when *Muga* silk first appeared, a famous European traveler named Jean Joseph Travenier made the first official record of it by noting that "the silk is good, but the people produced little more than they require for use," with a special mention of Assam's *Muga* silkworm variety that endures on trees round the year and amazing items made by them back in 1662 [30, 39].

The *Pat* silk is ivory-white in color. *Pat* silk is produced mainly in Karnataka, Andhra Pradesh, West Bengal, Tamil Nadu, and Jammu and Kashmir, accounting for 92 percent of the country's total production [40]. Assam and a few other states together contribute to the rest of the manufacture of *Pat* silk in India. Every Assamese bride would wear a traditional white *Pat Mekhela Chadar* to her wedding, as this is the dress that is considered to be the most auspicious for the occasion. At the time of metamorphosis, the *pat* silkworm tends to form an encasement to protect itself, which is called a cocoon [41].

2.4 Silk Status in India

The past 60 years have seen tremendous growth, both horizontally and vertically, in India's silk industry. The implementation of plans and programs by federal and state agencies, and the tireless efforts of thousands of dedicated individuals working in the fields of research and extension, have all contributed to this success [13].

Pat silk made up 73.97% (25,818 MT) of the 34,903 MT of raw silk made in India, *Tasar* silk made up 4.20% (1,466 MT), *Eri* silk made up 21.10% (7,364 MT), and *Muga* silk made up 0.73% (255 MT). Bivoltine has increased the amount of raw silk it makes by 17.07%, from 6,783 MT in 2020-21 to 7941 MT in 2021-22. The production of *Eri* and *Muga* silks increased in 2021–2022 over 2020–2021 by 6% and 6.7%, respectively [42].

Since yarn is typically produced in response to advance orders at a set price, there has been an unusually sudden increase in yarn prices, which has caused untold misery in the local industry. The weaver's income is ultimately squeezed throughout the entire process. The price of *Eri* yarn, as per the report of 2021-22 was Rs. 2500-2900 per kilogram. *Muga* raw silk yarn costs between Rs 19800-30000 per kilogram. *Pat* silk yarn costs approximately Rs. 4500-5000 per kilogram (2015-16) [43]. The price of raw silk from 2016-2022 is shown in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1: Price of Raw silk from 2016 to 2022 (source: SERICULTURAL STATISTICS IN INDIA - A GLANCE, 2022, Ministry of Textiles, GOI) [43]

Silk	Unit	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22
Raw <i>Eri</i>	Rs./Kg	1800-2600	2100-2700	2250-2800	2500-2900	2460-2800	2500-2900
Raw <i>Muga</i>	Rs./Kg	14200-18000	13000-22000	18000-25000	19400-25500	19800-26000	19800-30000
Raw <i>Pat</i>	Rs./Kg	2864	3500	3191	3026	2562	3421

Although India is the second-largest grower of raw silk in the world, it has a relatively small (4-5%) share of the global silk trade. This is because the domestic market in India

is so large; it accounts for about 85% of the sales of all silk products worldwide. However, India ships out around 15% of its total silk output, including the value-added items. Indian silk products are mostly textiles, made-ups, and ready-to-wear, but they also include carpets, bedspreads, cushion covers, and other home decor items [44, 45]. The export of silk products has increased rapidly over the past decade, resulting in a sharp rise in export revenues. One of the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats (SWOT) analysis of Indian Silk suggests voids in technological shift and additional support as one of its major weaknesses [44].

Projects and research that are encouraged or already underway by the Ministry of Textiles, Government of India, as per the 2022-23 Annual Report, include the following: collaborative research projects to reinforce the genetic base and hybrid vigor; promotion of research and development to grow crop cycles; expansion of organized plantation of *Vanya* silks for orderly rearing; promotion of horizontal spread of sericulture in non-traditional regions, including the North-East, by means of a cluster approach [42]. The same report also encourages beneficiaries to have their soil tested and to receive a soil health card, use of chemical-free farming methods for silk variety *Vanya* silk, improve productivity and quality in the fabric manufacturing process by providing critical input support to beneficiaries [46]. Realization of added value through the use of un-used (pupa) as poultry feed [47, 48], Sericin in cosmetics, and product diversity into non-woven clothes, silk denim, silk knit, etc. [49, 50]; Increase private sector involvement in seed production and improve state-run seed multiplication programs [51]. But post-care or maintenance research or projects generally lagged behind. There are numerous studies going on to increase the manufacture of silk, but the importance of using non-mulberry silks in applications apart from textiles is not highlighted. There is much silk waste generated in the entire sericulture process that can also be used in other applications that need to be studied [52].

2.5 Silk care

Care labels instruct consumers and garment caretakers on the optimal cleaning procedures for a specific combination of fabric, thread, decoration, and construction techniques. Before being delivered to the market, silk production requires extensive processing, including dyeing and washing [53]. It is common knowledge that silk clothing

is delicate when it comes to laundering and requires a scientific approach, the right procedure, and the right refurbishing techniques [54]. With proper care and protection from heat, sunlight, perspiration, washing, and harsh chemicals, silk will last for many years. Silk is a naturally robust fiber with a beautiful drape that is naturally resistant to creasing. Silk's weakness when wet necessitates gentle laundering because it loses its tensile strength when wet [55, 56]. Researchers have used a variety of cross-linkers to address the issue of wet crease recovery angle and shrinkage following laundering [57]. It has been reported that silk's easy care properties can be improved with the help of formaldehyde-based cross-linkers [58, 59]. Unfortunately, human exposure to formaldehyde can be harmful or even fatal [60]. As a result, zero formaldehyde cross-linkers are becoming more significant. Although butane tetracarboxylic acid (BTCA) had been suggested for use on silk, it was extremely pricey [61]. Methacrylamide had additionally been applied using the radiation grafting technique. Although this method improved the performance of silk fabrics, a significant drawback was the need for separate, infrequently used equipment [62]. Other unconventional chemical application techniques, such as ultraviolet curing [63], had also been reported for silk, but they were less well received by the traditional textile industry because they required specialized tools. Since silk is a natural fiber that does not harm the environment, researchers are putting more effort into developing environmentally friendly methods of treating it. Examples include enzymatic degumming [64] and dyeing silk with natural dyes [65, 66]. Loss of profit results from the product being rejected because of a processing-related defect. Other defects that may be the cause of rejection and return are dimensional instability by exhibiting reversible as well as irreversible shrinkage, or less commonly, expansion under certain conditions (when in contact with available moisture and/or high-temperature during washing, machine-dry, steaming, and ironing). Fabric contractions raise issues during garment manufacture or during succeeding washing by consumers [40]. Washing is a robust method as it requires physical force, warm water, and detergent [67, 68]. In addition to this, drying in a machine impacts the structural firmness of cloth as the material remains moist initially and later encounters agitation in a hot set-up [69]. The dimensional change related to laundering can be due to a number of causes. The major types of dimensional changes in fabrics [67]:

- Hygral expansion: A fabric's dimensions can change in a way called hygral expansion, which mainly happens when it absorbs moisture. It is possible for it to happen in either the warp or weft directions. wrinkling, pattern-piece mismatch, and the resulting changes in the cloth's overall look and fit, as well as bobble appearance in pleated panels and exfoliation of fusible inner linings, are all caused by hygral expansion.
- Relaxation shrinkage: All textiles are susceptible to relaxation shrinkage, an irreversible process that reduces their size. Fibers experience significant stresses from extension, twisting, and bending during weaving and finishing. The stress reduction manifests itself as a change in shape or shrinkage during the laundering process.
- Swelling Shrinkage: When water is absorbed or ejected from a material, it causes individual fibers to expand and contract width-wise. The overall mechanism of expansion is determined by the weave's tightness.
- Felting shrinkage: Water increases a fabric's propensity for its scales to interact with rough surfaces on nearby surfaces, which raises the frictional difference.

The low wet resiliency of silk makes it inconvenient to take care of. It is suggested that the absence of intermolecular chemical crosslinking makes it poor at wet resiliency. It has been mentioned that while washing, the fibers absorb water, leading to swelling that causes breakage of the salt linkages that connect the polymers, which was the reason for crease recovery [70]. There have been chemical finishing methods to deal with the issue, like graft-copolymerization, reactions with epoxides and dibasic anhydrides, etc., but these further complicate the normal wash and wear properties [71, 72]. Formaldehyde release was an important issue with the use of Amino formaldehyde resins in silk for crease-resistant finishing. Poly-carboxylic acids like citric acid or 1,2,3,4-butanetetracarboxylic acid have a high curing temperature that reaches up to 170°C to finish silk fabrics, which further might change its physicochemical and mechanical properties [73, 74].

Thus, felting is a result of the interaction between moisture, mechanical agitation, and heat during washing or laundering. When something shrinks, the area is reduced, and the fabric thickness is increased. Additionally, it causes alterations in the way the fabrics

handle and their overall texture [67]. The required dimensional changes ought to be less than a predetermined maximum, predictable, and thus controllable [74]. To handle the stresses and modifications that have occurred during the manufacturing process and withstand the washing issues, distinct laundering techniques for particular fabrics need to be encouraged [75-77]. Detergents, conditioners, or commercially available agents for washing and traditionally used agents can be checked for challenging the post-laundering changes that occur in *Eri*, *Muga*, and *Pat*.

When drying care was required for silk fabrics, consumers frequently used sunlight [78]. However, due to the delicate nature of silk fiber, silk fabrics are prone to a number of issues during traditional home sunlight drying, including shrinkage, yellowing, wrinkling, and mechanical property deterioration [7, 78-80]. Conventional sunlight drying also has a number of other drawbacks, including a lengthy drying time, bacterial contamination, mildew growth (especially during the rainy season), susceptibility to weather changes, and UV radiation damage [78, 81]. Laundering and drying silk fabrics became a significant challenge as a result of daily use [78, 81].

2.6 Antimicrobial components in silk and dyeing

There have been contradictory reports regarding whether silk has natural antibacterial agents or if it actually supports bacterial growth [82]. In support, Royet et al. reported that silkworms produce effector proteins in their hemolymph that act as antimicrobials [83]. In order to protect the cocoons from micro-predators, seroins, and proteinase inhibitors are expressed in their glands [82]. A fungal protector (protease inhibitor) was also reported to be present in wild Indian *Tasar* silkworms [84]. In silkworms, *B. mori*, Moricin (antibacterial peptide in hemolymph) is reported to be present [85]. However, these suggest protection for the silkworm from microbes, but it isn't clear if the same is passed to the cocoons and subsequently to the silk fabric. Contradictory to these studies, there have been reports that sericin aids the growth of *Escherichia coli*. Kaur et al. conducted extensive research to find a solution to the contradictory findings, and they dismissed all claims that the results had an antibacterial effect [82]. It was found that silk cocoons and individual components of silk cocoons show no antibacterial effect and, in some cases, enhance its growth. Their study supports that a high pH or the remains of

the chemicals used in silk processing might have acted as an antibacterial agent, resulting in misleading antibacterial test results [82].

Silk's rigid storage conditions prevent it from being used effectively because bacteria can easily attach to and grow on it, leading to deformation and even degradation. The presence of protein (as a nutrient), moisture, etc., platforms microbial growth and multiplication in silk fiber [86, 87]. This leads to fiber degradation, foul odors, discoloration, mildew formation, dermal infection, allergies, and related diseases [88, 89]. The wearer's health is adversely affected by all of these. There have been many works on the antimicrobial fictionalization of silk, like quaternary ammonium organosilanes, inorganic materials, antimicrobial peptides, etc., to tackle the problem of microbial attack [90]. The topological coating of silver nanoparticles blocks the growth of a particular type of bacteria (*Staphylococcus aureus*) [91, 92]. The presence of *S. aureus* makes the fabric surface appear pale [91].

2.7 Silk dyeing

Many different kinds of dyestuffs can be used to color silk in various ways. Almost any type of dye suitable for use with cotton or wool can also be used with silk [92]. The physical structure of the fiber also affects how readily dyes bind to a specific fiber structure. It has been found that silk contains regions with varying levels of molecular order and disorder, referred to as crystalline and amorphous regions, respectively [93] [94]. The groups -COOH and -NH₂ are those that are found in abundance and are ionized at a suitable pH [95]. Ionic or covalent bonds mediate the interaction between dye and fiber. The process of coloring silk is determined by free amino and carboxyl groups as well as phenolic groups with available -OH [96, 97]. Shade, brightness, and fastness grades are key considerations when selecting a color [98-100]. Dyestuffs colored with dyes that are acid and metal-complex have a stronger affinity for fiber, up taken quickly, and do not fade much in the wash, but their washing fastness is only fair. Reactive dyes provide excellent wash fastness and a wide variety of dischargeable colors that are also highly perspiration-fast [101, 102]. Due to the development of colored cations, which forbid the reaction with protonated amino groups when dyeing in an acidic bath, silk that has been basic dyed has low light fastness. The major structural characteristics of fibers

that control their reactivity or dyeability and they must both be taken into account in any attempt to establish a correlation between fiber structure and dyeing behavior [103-105]:

1. permeability, or how easily dye molecules disperse into the fiber matrix;
2. the receptive functional groups in the fiber.

Natural dyes make quite vibrant hues on *Pat* silk, whereas *Tussar*, spun, and textured varieties are the only ones capable of producing deep tones. To make the color permanent, mordants are frequently required for these dyes [106, 107]. Even though some of the mordants are damaging to silk, some dyes have good lightfastness and washfastness [108, 109]. A complicated series of procedures is used to extract coloring matter from almost all parts of different plants, as well as from some insects and shellfish [110,111]. Turmeric, berberis, *Dolu* (yellow), *Annato* (orange), and *Henna* (brown) produce vibrant hues. Tannins, which act as a natural origin mordant, may be partially responsible for the substantivity of these dyes [112, 113].

There has been a one-step dyeing and finishing process where a specific dye is chosen that possesses the potential for antimicrobial activity, which saves time and energy, reduces cost, increases production and efficiency, and reduces effluent load. Natural dyes are considered better for possessing antimicrobial agents and exhibiting good biodegradability and compatibility with the environment [114-117]. *Cuminum cyminum L.*, also known as cumin seeds, were used to dye silk fabric, and pre-mordanting with tannic acid and metal salts like potassium aluminum sulphate, ferrous sulphate, copper sulphate, etc. resulted in intense hues with a wider range of yellow-brown tones and improved fastness [118, 119]. Also, the usual addition of colors into fabrics needs robust dyeing set-ups (e.g., high temperature and high pH), subsequently repeated washing to remove unbound dyes, which not only demand high water usage and energy but also damage the structures and thus the original properties of silk fibers [120, 121]. In this regard, it is very important to opt for natural dyes and dyeing methods that will be eco-friendly and, similarly, can meet the problem of microbial growth [111]. Using certain natural agents with anti-microbial activities can be an option for this. It is needed to study how natural dyes can be optimized to be comparable with any synthetic dye.

2.8 Biodegradation of Silk

It is important to know the status of silk in the environment before it breaks down. Hence, it is important to know how ecologically friendly silk is. Being a protein fiber, silk biodegrades over time in the environment [122, 123]. Interestingly, it takes time to degrade compared to the rest of the natural origin fibers [124, 125]. The crystallites of silk fabric are orderly situated in amorphous chain residues, whereas the amorphous area is defined by the presence of tyrosine and is thought to have distorted β -sheets, distorted β -turns, and α -helices conformations, loose structures that count on the elastic property of silk [126]. This complex structure is a big challenge to understanding the degradation pattern of fibroin. There were studies where measurable units were considered for the physical deterioration of silk, such as spectroscopic, chromatographic, and chemical aspects. It was seen that during the process of degradation, there is a distinct break in the amorphous region where the crystallites lose their strong link with the fiber axis, but it still remains intact till the last stage [126, 127]. The degradation pattern of natural silk is complex due to its complex and specific orderly structure. Silk fiber starts signs of biodegradation after approximately four years, however, it has been established that using enzymes (acidic) can accelerate it [128, 129]. It is essential to study the biodegradation methods of *Eri*, *Muga*, and *Pat* and also to know the impact of protease-producing bacteria during the process of both untreated silk and silk fabric treated with different agents.

2.9 Biocompatibility and uses of Silk

Increased environmental consciousness around the world has sparked a surge in research into biocomposites for use in a wide range of medical settings [130-133]. A preliminary demonstration of silk's biocompatibility is the first step toward transferring silk technologies from the laboratory setting into clinical practice [127]. Silk polymer's beneficial properties include its ability to promote tissue formation, biodegradability, hemocompatibility, cytocompatibility, and cell interactions. Many studies have focused on surface modification to increase silk fibroin's blood compatibility [134]. The molecular simplicity of silk fibroin's structure has frequently led to its classification as a "model biomaterial". In general, it has been referred to as a "clinically approved" biomaterial for human use, but the term biocompatibility needs to be application-specific

[135, 136]. Clinical approval is widespread for the use of silk in load-bearing applications, such as the knitted surgical mesh made from *Bombyx mori* silk fibers (degummed), silk sutures, and silk garments used to treat dermatological conditions [127, 137]. Biocompatibility evaluation is an essential part of any process involving novel silk formats (hydrogels, nanoparticles, films, etc.) or the use of uncommon silks to touch unexplored areas of clinical need or even the application of any existing technology [138]. In a straightforward *in vivo* comparison of silk against other natural (collagen) and synthetic (polylactic acid) biomaterials, it was proven that *B. mori* silk fibroin matches the synthetic counterpart and shows better results than other natural biomaterials [139]. More biocompatibility studies on silk are needed to support the new medical developments [140]. Deducing results from macroscopic films to nanoscale particles isn't always valid in biological performances, and so, for any such tests as intravenous administrations of drugs through silk, hemocompatibility assessment is required [141, 142]. The association between silk and biocompatibility in humans started with silk sutures, which have been in use for several centuries, and the market launch of SERI Surgical Scaffold after attaining clearance by the FDA [143, 144]. When it comes to using implantable materials like artificial blood vessels and orthopedic implants, hemocompatibility is a very important consideration that needs to be taken into account [145, 146]. It is important to improve hemocompatibility while developing materials that are in contact with blood [147]. When blood comes into contact with a foreign body, it starts the competitive adsorption of plasma proteins [148]. The effectiveness of using silk fibroin (SF) films in the skin regeneration procedure using rabbits and pigs as animal models was reported [149]. This study highlights the remarkable biocompatibility and effectiveness of SF as a biomaterial. The sericin of the silkworm *Bombyx mori* inhibits lipid peroxidation and tyrosinase activity [150]. As an antioxidant, it can protect the cocoon and silkworm from oxidative stress [151]. The free radicals hydroxyl, superoxide, and 2-diphenyl-1-picrylhydrazyl (DPPH) are all successfully inhibited by sericin. Sericin from *Bombyx mori* has a powerful chelating and reducing effect on ferrous ions, establishing it as a natural antioxidant [47, 152]. Sericin's physicochemical properties make it a potential biocompatible substance for future use in a variety of biomedical fields [153]. According to reports, sericin possesses a vast array of biological properties, including anti-oxidation, anti-bacterial, anti-coagulation, and promotion of cell growth and differentiation [154].

Sericin is frequently copolymerized, crosslinked, or combined with other polymers to create scaffolds in the field of regenerative medicine due to its biodegradability, accessibility, and hydrophilicity [150].

2.10 Applications

Apart from textiles, silk is known to have many applications, which is increasing its demand. Silk is a widely accessible, biocompatible, and ecologically supportable natural material [129]. Silk technology and design have a lot of room to grow in areas like "smart" clothing and cutting-edge performance garments. Innovative textiles enhanced with senses other than vision are on the horizon [155]. In the coming decades, research and development could revolutionize the silk industry by creating silks that are cooling, scented, and mosquito-repellent [114]. Because of its unique biocompatibility, biodegradability, and mechanical properties, silk has been used in a wide variety of applications, including structural composites, tissue engineering, drug delivery systems, and sensing technologies [135]. However, raw silk is not useful and must be functionalized or surface-modified to improve properties and stability before it can be put to good use. Suturing, the process of stitching wounds, is a process where silk has dominated for centuries [156].

There are silk nano-fiber air filters that exhibit superior filtration [129, 157]. Silk paper was used to filter bacteria-contaminated solution. It was found that the bacteria remained as residues on the surface of the paper. Thus, it implies that silk paper can be a micro-filter [158]. There are reports where fibroin is used for optics and sensing because it has mechanical strength, low weight, biocompatibility, and bio-restorability. These are useful in bio instrumentation, pharmaceuticals, medical diagnostics, and therapeutic applications [117]. Most notably, fibroin has been developed as waveguides (i.e., optical fibers), diffraction gratings, lens arrays, electrical sensors, oxygen sensors, pH sensors, glucose sensors, food sensors, etc. [117]. Sericin from silk is a well-known biocompatible and biodegradable substance. Due to additional properties such as gelatinizing, moisture holding, and skin adhesion, it has a wide range of uses in the medical, pharmaceutical, and cosmetics industries [159]. Cosmetics for the skin, hair, and nails contain sericin alone or in combination with silk fibroin [160]. Sericin's anti-aging, anti-wrinkle, and skin-tightening effects are most noticeable when applied topically in the form of a lotion,

cream, or ointment [161]. Sericin gel maintains the skin's moisture well, as demonstrated by the hydroxyproline assay, impedance measurement, and trans-epidermal water loss (TEWL) test [162]. It is believed that silk will have a variety of a range of new functions that will contribute as a natural replacement for many synthetic substances and open up prospects for many novel applications [117].

2.11 References

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