Soaps are cleaning agents that are usually made by reacting alkali (e.g., sodium hydroxide) with naturally occurring fat or fatty acids. A soap is a salt of a compound known as a fatty acid. A soap molecule consists of a long hydrocarbon chain (composed of carbons and hydrogens) with a carboxylic acid group on one end which is ionic bonded to a metalion, usually a sodium or potassium. The hydrocarbon end is nonpolar and is soluble in nonpolar substances (such as fats and oils), and the ionic end (the salt of a carboxylic acid) is soluble in water. Soap is made by combining tallow (or other hard animal fat) or vegetable or fish oil with an alkaline solution. The two most important alkalis in use are caustic soda and caustic potash.

A detergent is an effective cleaning product because it contains one or more surfactants. Because of their chemical makeup, the surfactants used in detergents can be engineered to perform well under a variety of conditions. Such surfactants are less sensitive than soap to the hardness minerals in water and most will not form a film.

Disinfectants are chemical agents applied to non-living objects in order to destroy bacteria, viruses, fungi, mold or mildews living on the objects. Disinfectants are chemical substances used to destroy viruses and microbes (germs), such as bacteria and fungi, as opposed to an antiseptic which can prevent the growth and reproduction of various microorganisms, but does not destroy them. The ideal disinfectant would offer complete sterilization, without harming other forms of life, be inexpensive, and non-corrosive.

The global soap and detergent market is expected to reach USD 207.56 billion by 2025. The industrial soaps & detergents are extensively used by the commercial laundries, hotels, restaurants, and healthcare providers. Increasing demand from healthcare and food industries will continue to drive the market. Aerosol and liquid products are the common disinfectants used in hospitals, although growing number of healthcare facilities are implementing ultraviolet disinfection systems as further measure. Increasing demand for disinfectants from water treatment and healthcare industries is fuelling growth of the global disinfectants market.

This book will be a milestone for its readers who are new to this sector, will also find useful for professionals, entrepreneurs, those studying and researching in this important area.

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