

Soap

Oils and fats are esters formed by the combination of the alcohol, glycerol and the fatty acids like palmitic acid, stearic acid, oleic acid etc. Soap is the salt formed when oils and fats react with alkalies. Soap has an oil soluble non polar end and a water soluble polar end. The hydro carbon part in soap dissolves in oil and the ionic part (polar end) dissolves in water. So in the presence of soap, dirt can be easily removed. Moreover, soap decreases the surface tension of water and as a result the clothes are soaked well. Soap molecules act as a link between water and dirt and remove the dirt.

Detergent

Like soaps, detergents are cleansing agents. Similar to soaps, they also have an oil soluble non polar end and a water soluble polar end. Detergents are made from hydrocarbons obtained from coal and petroleum. Most detergents are salts of sulphonic acids.