

Catalysis Science & Technology

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ARTICLE TYPE

Cite this: DOI: 10.1039/c0xx00000x

www.rsc.org/xxxxxx

Synthesis of chiral fluorescence active probe and its application as an efficient catalyst in asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation of indole derivatives with nitroalkenes

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s Received (in XXX, XXX) Xth XXXXXXXX 20XX, Accepted Xth XXXXXXXX 20XX DOI: 10.1039/b000000x

The novel chiral Zn(II) Complexes were synthesized and these complexes showed the fluorescence behaviour. The chiral Zn(II) complex was tested in asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indole derivatives with nitroalkenes. In all cases, the desired product was obtained with high yield (up to ¹⁰ 93%) and good enantioselectivity (up to 78% ee) under the optimized reaction conditions. The effect of solvent, metallic salt and piperidine ratio on the fluorescence intensity of catalyst and on enantioselectivity of desired products was discussed.

Introduction

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The Friedel-Crafts alkylation is a key reaction in organic 15 synthesis for the formation of new carbon-carbon bonds.¹ This reaction requires aromatic substrate and electron deficient alkenes such as α , β -unsaturated ketones,² ketone enolates,³ arylidene malonates,⁴ α-hydroxy enones,⁵ 3-nitro-2H-chromenes,⁶ α-Substituted β -Nitroacrylates⁷, nitrodienes and 2-Propargyloxy- β -20 nitrostyrenes.⁸ The asymmetric version of Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indoles with electron-deficient alkenes is of vital importance,⁹ as enantiomerically pure indole skeleton is widely used for the synthesis of natural products, active pharmaceutical intermediates (APIs), agrochemicals and 25 functional materials.¹⁰ The potential examples of indole skeleton alkaloids are Uleine, Hapalindole G, Deethylibophyllidine, Brevicolline and physostigmine which exhibit important biological activities (Figure 1).¹¹ Furthermore, nitroalkenes are very efficient Michael acceptors where the nitro group can easily 30 converted into expensive amino functional group and variety of different functionalities:¹² because of this speciality nitroalkenes

are widely observed in many organic transformations.

The increasing demand of the indole containing compounds in pharmaceutical sciences has lead to the development of new ³⁵ strategies for the synthesis of enantiomerically pure indole derivatives with high selectivity. Several reports have appeared in the literature using chiral Lewis acids derived from chiral ligands and metal salts for the asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indole derivatives with trans β-Nitrostyrene.¹³ In

- ⁴⁰ addition, some organocatalysts are also applied for asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction.¹⁴ The above protocol gave good yield and enantiomeric excess of products; however few protocols have some drawbacks such as low enantioselectivity, a long reaction time, use of additives, low selectivity and multistep
- ⁴⁵ designed ligands. This limits the practical applications of reported protocols.



Fig. 1 Enantiopure indole skeleton in bioactive compounds

In the past, several methods have been developed for the ⁵⁰ synthesis of molecule-based highly selective and sensitive enantioselective fluorescence sensor for chiral recognition of bioactive enantiomers.¹⁵ Chiral recognition of enantiomers also helps us to know more about interactions of bioloactive molecules, separation process, designing asymmetric catalysis ⁵⁵ systems and screening of high-throughput chiral catalysts.¹⁶ In 2002, Lin *et al.* reported the chiral molecular squares bipyridyl bridging ligands and fac-Re(CO)₃Cl corners for enantioselective Sensing,¹⁷ subsequently they prepared chiral organometallic triangles Pt-acetylide linkage and utilized as a chiral catalysts.¹⁸

In the last two decades in combination of various chiral ligands and achiral or meso ligands have been successfully applied as a combinatorial complex in many reactions¹⁹ which showed good results as compared to original chiral ligands. In the present study 65 we are applying this fluorescence sensor and combinatorial ligand concept to prepare the enantiomerically pure fluorescence sensor of novel Schiff base zinc(II) complex with piperidine as an achiral combinatorial ligand. The prepared fluorescence active Schiff base zinc(II) complex is successfully applied for asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indole with trans β -nitrostyrene. This reaction is carried out at -15 °C for 40 h and β afforded enantiomerically pure 3-substituted indole derivatives in high yields (up to 90%) with excellent enantiomeric excess (up to 78% ee) (figure 2).



Fig. 2 Asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indole with trans ¹⁰ β-nitrostyrene.

Result and Discussion

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Initially we prepared the (1S,2R)-1-[(2-Hydroxy-3,5-di-tert-butylbenzylidene)-amino]-indan-2-ol according to a reported procedure.²⁰ 3,5-Di-tert-butylsalicylaldehyde (10 mmol) was 15 dissolved in 60 mL ethanol. (1S,2R)-1-Amino-2-indanol (10.5 mmol) was added in one portion. The solution instantly turned bright yellow in colour. The mixture was stirred for 2 h at room temperature; ethanol was removed on the rotary evaporator. The resulting solid was dried under vacuum to give L1 (Figure 3).



Fig. 3 Synthesis of chiral ligand L1

The chiral Zn(II) complex was prepared at room temperature by addition of L1(0.04 mmol) and Zn(OTf)₂ (0.04 mmol) in 3 mL ²⁵ toluene and stirred it for 10 min. Then, we added piperidine (0.2 mmol) and the resulting reaction mixture were stirred for 30 minutes at room temperature (30 °C) (see figure.4). The prepared chiral Zn(II) complex was studied by fluorescence spectroscopy. In this study, we investigated the effect of various parameters

³⁰ such as solvatochromic effect with different metal salts and effect of piperidine concentration on fluorescence intensity of chiral Zn(II) complex.



Fig. 4 Synthesis of chiral Zn(II) Complex

³⁵ The fluorescence spectra of chiral Zn(II) complex were investigated in different solvents like toluene, dichloromethane



⁴⁵ Fig. 5 Effect of solvent on fluorescence intensity chiral Zn(II) complex

Then the effects of metal salts such as $Zn(OTf)_2$, $Sc(OTf)_3$, In(OTf)₃, Yb(OTf)₃, Cu(OTf)₂ on the fluorescence intensity of ligand L1 in toluene were studied; where we observed that ligand L1 showed maximum fluorescence intensity in combination with ⁵⁰ Zn(OTf)₂. The Ligand L1 showed fluorescence intensity at λ_{ex} =471 nm with Zn(OTf)₂ (figure 6). While the fluorescence intensity of ligand L1 with Sc(OTf)₃ showed lower intensity as compared to Zn(OTf)₂ even in double concentration with decreasing wavelength (456 nm). The fluorescence intensity of the complex formed between In(OTf)₃, Yb(OTf)₃, Cu(OTf)₂ with ligand L1 was negligible at same wavelength (471nm).



Fig.6 Effect of various metal salts on fluorescence intensity of ligand L1 in toluene

⁶⁰ Furthermore, we studied the effect of ligand to piperidine ratio on fluorescence intensity of chiral Zn(II) complex. Different molar ratio was also screened ranging from 01:01, 01:02, 01:03 and 01:04. Herein, we synthesized the chiral Zn(II) complex with above mentioned ligand to piperidine ratio. The chiral Zn(II) ⁶⁵ complex with molar ratio 01:01gave slight fluorescence intensity, when we increase the molar ratio from 01:01 to 01:02 the fluorescence intensity increases dramatically, further increasing the molar ratio from 01:02 to 01:03, 01:04 the fluorescence intensity increases slightly. The molar ratio 01:04

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shows maximum fluorescence intensity $\lambda_{ex} = 471$ nm (figure 7).



Fig.7 Effect of piperidine concentration on fluorescence intensity chiral Zn (II) complex in toluene

⁵ Based on these results, we focused on the experiments to check the role of every components of chiral Zn(II) complex on fluorescence behaviour. Initially, we omitted the metal from chiral complex and observed that the fluorescence intensity was decreases dramatically. Moreover the fluorescence intensity was

¹⁰ not observed in absence of metal and piperidine. Later on, we performed the control experiments only with the piperidine and in combination of piperidine-metal which did not show fluorescence intensity. All these experiments proved that all components are necessary to from the active chiral Zn(II) complex. The complex ¹⁵ showed maximum fluorescence intensity at $\lambda_{ex} = 471$ nm which confirms that there is strong interaction in the ligand L1, Zn(OTf)₂, and piperidine which is shown in figure 8.



Fig. 8 Comparison of fluorescence intensity of piperidine (P) with ²⁰ Zn(OTf)₂ metal (M), L1 ligand (L), ligand with metal and combination of ligand, metal , piperidine (chiral Zn(II) complex) in toluene.

Fig. 8 Comparison of fluorescence intensity of piperidine (P) with $Zn(OTf)_2$ metal (M), **L1** ligand (L), ligand with metal and combination of ligand, metal, piperidine (chiral Zn(II) complex) in toluene

- ²⁵ Initially we performed the Friedel-Crafts alkylation of indole 3a with trans-β-nitrostyrene 4a in toluene at room temperature using L1-Zn(OTf)₂-Piperdene complex as a catalyst. The desired product 5a was obtained in 92 % yield with 60% ee (Table 1, entry 1). To compare the efficiency of ligand L1, we prepared
- ³⁰ another ligand L2 by reaction of (1S,2R)-1-Amino-2-indanol and 4-(diethylamino)benzaldehyde using above mentioned procedure and applied on substrate indole **3a** with trans- β -nitrostyrene **4a** at room temperature; where we observed that the desired product **5a** was obtained with good yield but failed to provide high

- ³⁵ enantiomeric excess; therefore ligand L1 was used for further experiments. In the L1 is there are two sterically hindered *tert*-butyl groups on the phenol ring which act as donor group in the complex formation, because of this sterically hindered group ligand L1 showed good enantiomeric excess as compared to ⁴⁰ ligand L2. Then, we screened various metallic salts such as Cu(OTf)₂, Sc(OTf)₃, Yb(OTf)₃, In(OTf)₃ (Table 1, entries 3-6). The Cu(OTf)₂, Sc (OTf)₃ provided good yields but failed to give high enantiomeric excess of desired product. In combination of ligand L1 with Yb(OTf)₃, In(OTf)₃ provided desired product 5a ⁴⁵ in racemic form with moderate yield (Table 1, entries 5-6). Thus in present study L1 as a chiral ligand and Zn(OTf)₂ as the
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metallic salt was selected as the best catalyst for further

optimization study (Table1, entry 1).

50 Table 1 Effect of ligands, metal salts and catalyst loading on the asymmetric Friedel- Crafts alkylation of indole.^a

Entry	Ligand	Metal salt	% Yield ^b	%ee ^c
Ligand Sc	reening			
1	L1	Zn(OTf) ₂	92	60
2	L2	$Zn(OTf)_2$	88	19
Metal scre	eening			
3	Ľ1	Cu(OTf) ₂	47	16
4	L1	Sc(OTf) ₃	91	4
5	L1	Yb(OTf) ₃	54	Racemic
6	L1	In(OTf) ₃	47	Racemic

 ^a Reaction conditions: nitrostyrene-0.5 mmol, indole-0.6 mmol, toluene-3mL, ligand-0.05 mmol, metal-0.05 mmol, piperidine-0.15 mmol, temperature- RT, time-48 h, ^b Isolated yield, ^c Determined by chiral
 ⁵⁵ HPLC analysis on a Chiralcel OD-H column..

The effect of catalyst loading ranging from 5-20 mol% of substrate for model reaction of indole **3a** with trans- β -nitrostyrene **4a** was studied (Table 2, entries1-4), and it was observed that ⁶⁰ increasing the catalyst loading from 5 mol% to 10 mol% led to remarkable increases in the yield and enantiomeric excess of desired product **5a**. Further increase in the catalyst loading did not show any profound effect on yield and enantiomeric excess of desired product.

65 **Table 2** Effect of catalyst loading on the asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation of indole.^{*a*}

Entry	Ligand (mol %)	Metal (mol %)	Piperidine (mol %)	% Yield ^b	% ee ^c
1	5	5	15	87	54
2	10	10	30	92	60
3	15	15	45	92	60
4	20	20	60	94	58
5	10		30	16	50
6		10	30	25	Racemic
7	10	10		88	5
8	10			<10	8

^{*a*} Reaction conditions: ligand -L1, Metal- Zn(OTf)₂, nitrostyrene-0.5 mmol, indole-0.6 mmol, toluene-3mL, ^{*b*} Isolated yield, ^{*c*} Determined by chiral HPLC analysis on a Chiralcel OD-H column.

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Entry	Solvent	Amines	L1 : Piperidine ratio	Temp. (°C)	Time (h)	% Yield ^b	% ee ^c
Effect of s	solvent						
1	ACN	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	85	53
2	MTBE	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	72	44
3	THF	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	78	44
4	DCM	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	82	53
5	CHCl ₃	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	90	51
6	<i>n</i> -hexane	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	70	46
7	Toluene	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	92	60
Effect of a	umines	-					
		\frown					
8	Toluene	→ _N ↓	1:3	RT	48	38	45
9	Toluene		1:3	RT	48	91	31
10	Toluene	F	1:3	RT	48	86	39
11	Toluene		1:3	RT	48	79	47
12	Toluene	N H	1:3	RT	48	84	50
Effect of p	piperidine ratio						
13	Toluene	Piperidine	1:1	RT	48	94	11
14	Toluene	Piperidine	1:2	RT	48	94	53
15	Toluene	Piperidine	1:3	RT	48	92	60
16	Toluene	Piperidine	1:4	RT	48	91	63
17	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	RT	48	92	64
18	Toluene	Piperidine	1:6	RT	48	92	64
19	Toluene	Piperidine	1:7	RT	48	90	64
20	Toluene	Piperidine	1:8	RT	48	89	63
21^{d}	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	RT	48	92	64
22^{e}	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	RT	48	92	64
23 ^f	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	RT	48	90	64
Effect of t	emperature	*					
24	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	0	48	91	70
25	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	48	91	75
26	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-20	48	90	73
Effect of t	ime	1					
27	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	14	34	58
28	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	20	46	60
29	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	24	76	67
30	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	28	89	68
31	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	40	92	75
32	Toluene	Piperidine	1:5	-15	48	92	75

s ^{*a*} Reaction conditions: a nitrostyrene-0.5 mmol, indole-0.6 mmol, toluene-3mL, **L1**-0.05 mmol, Zn(OTf)₂-0.05 mmol, ^{*b*} Isolated yield, ^{*c*} Determined by chiral HPLC analysis on a Chiralcel OD-H column, ^{*d*} 150mg 3Å MS, ^{*e*} 150mg 4 Å MS, ^{*f*} 150mg 5 Å MS

Based on these results, we performed the test experiments to check the roles of every component in the catalytic system. These ¹⁰ experiments showed that ligand L1, Zn(OTf)2 and piperidine were necessary for the efficient catalytic system (Table 2, entries

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5-8). To get the optimal reaction conditions, we studied the effect of the various reactions parameters such as effect of solvents,

- s amines, piperidine ratio, molecular sieves, temperature and time on the yield and enantiomeric excess of desired product (Table
 3). The influence of solvent on the asymmetric Friedel-Crafts reaction was investigated (Table 3, Entries 1-7). Solvents such as ACN (Acetonitrile), MTBE (methyl tertiary butyl ether), THF
- ¹⁰ (tetrahydrofuran), DCM (dichloromethane), CHCl₃ (chloroform), toluene and *n*-hexane were screened. Our catalyst showed high activity in toluene with 92% yield and 60% ee of desired product **5a** (Table 3, entry 7). Other solvents gave low enantioselectivity as compared to toluene (Table 3, entries 1-6), therefore, toluene ¹⁵ was used for further studies. The chiral Zn(II) complex with
- amines plays an important role on the enantioselectivity of desired product **5a**.Various amines such as 2,2,6,6tetramethylpiperidine (45% ee), cis-3,5-dimethylmorpholine (31% ee), 4-(2-fluorophenyl)piperidine(39% ee), 1,2,3,4-20 tetrahydro isoquinoline (47% ee), pyrrolidine (50% ee) were
- screened (Table 3, entries 8-12). Out of these amines piperidine provided (60% ee) good enantioselectivity; hence it was used for remaining experiments.

In the fluorescence study of chiral Zn(II) complex it was ²⁵ observed that when we increase the ratio of **L1** to piperidine the fluorescence intensity of catalyst increases, hence we checked the effect of molar ratio on enantioselectivity of the desired product. Therefore we screened the piperidine molar ratio ranging from 1: 1 to 1: 8 (ligand L1: piperidine) and observed that when we ³⁰ increase the molar ratio from 1:1 to 1:5, there was increase in the enantioselectivity desired product **5a** from 11% ee to 64% ee (Table 3, entries 13-17). These experiments was clearly indicates that when increase the fluorescence intensity of the chiral Zn(II) complex increases the enantioselectivity of desired product **5a**.

- ³⁵ With further increase in the piperidine ratio from 1:6 to 1:8 there is no effect on the enantioselectivity of desired product. Furthermore, we screened the role of molecular sieves on the yield and enantioselectivity of desired product 5a (Table 3, Entries 21-23) and it was observed that there is no effect on the ⁴⁰ yield and enantioselectivity of product 5a. Then we checked the effect of acid additives on yield and enantioselectivity of desired product 5a. We screened the various racemic and enantiomerically pure acids such as para-trifluoro benzoic acid,
- D- camphor sulphonic acid, N-boc proline, L- lactic acid, triflic 45 acid, (*R*)-tetrahydrofuran-2-carboxylic acid and tartaric acid, but they failed to increase the enantiomeric excess of desired product 5a(see ESI† Table 1). Thus the next experiments were carried out without acid additives. The effect of temperature on the yield and enantioselectivity of the product 5a was studied and the reactions
- ⁵⁰ were carried out at various temperatures ranging from room temperature to -20 °C (Table 3, entries 25-27). At room temperature, the enantioselectivity of **5a** was low, whereas decreasing the temperature to 0 °C leads to increase in enantioselectivity up to 70% ee. Further decrease in the ⁵⁵ temperature to -15 °C increases the enantioselectivity up to 75% ee. A further decrease in the temperature to -20 °C decreases the enantioselectivity of control of the temperature to -20 °C decreases the temperature to -20 °C decrea
- enantioselectivity to 73% ee. Hence optimized temperature is -15 °C. Finally, we examined the effect of time on the model reaction

60 (Table 3, entries 28-32). After 40 h, the maximum yield and

 $Zn(OTf)_2$ (0.05mmol), piperidine (0.15mmol) at -15°C for 40 h. With the optimal reaction conditions in hand, we performed

the asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction between indole 65 derivatives and nitrostyrene derivatives (Table 4, entries 1-12). We first surveyed a variety of indoles **5a-5f** bearing different substituents (Table 4, entries 1-6) which could react with nitrostyrene in good yields with high enantioselectivity. The substitution on the C-5 position of indole, with halogen (-Br, -Cl, 70 -F) substituent provided good enantioselectivities (78-76% ee, Table 4, entries 2-4). Further, electron donating (-OMe, -Me) substituent at C-5 of indole provided good enantioselectivities with **5e**:70% ee, **5f**:76% ee (Table 4, entries 5-6). The substituent effect on the nitrostyrene ring was also studied. The nitrostyrene 75 with halogen (-Br, -Cl, -F) substituent at para position gave corresponding products with good enantiomeric excess (69-76 % ee, Table 4, entries 7-9).

Table 4 Asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation of indole derivatives with nitroalkenes.^a



-	1	1 11	Ju	71	/ 4
5	OMe	Ph	5e	90	70
6	Me	Ph	5f	89	76
7	Н	4-BrC ₆ H ₄	5g	87	69
8	Н	4-ClC ₆ H ₄	5h	91	76
9	Н	$4-FC_6H_4$	5i	93	76
10	Н	4-MeC ₆ H ₄	5j	88	70
11	Н	4-OMeC ₆ H ₄	5k	85	72
12	Н		51	94	72

^a Reaction conditions: L1-(10 mol %), Zn(OTf)₂-(10 mol %), piperidine (50 mol %), toluene-(3ml), nitrostyrene-(1mmol), indole-(1.2 mmol), temperature- (-15 °C), ^b Isolated yield, ^c Determined by chiral HPLC analysis on a Chiralcel OD-H column.

Electron-rich (-Me, -OMe) aromatic nitrostyrene at para position furnished desired product with good enantioselectivity as **5j**: 70% ee and **5k**: 72% ee was obtained. It is notable that a heterocyclic nitrostyrene derivative provides good enantioselectivity as 51: 90 72% ee.

Conclusions

In conclusion, the novel and efficient catalytic asymmetric protocol for Friedel-Crafts alkylation reaction of indoles with nitroalkene derivatives by chiral Zn(II)-Schiff base complex was 95 developed. The Chiral Zn(II)complex was showed excellent fluorescence behaviour. The developed novel catalyst provides

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high yields (up to 93%) with good enantiomeric excess (up to 78%) for wide range of indoles and aromatic nitrostyrene derivatives under mild reaction conditions. The developed protocol offers high yields, good enantioselectivities, short s reaction time, mild reaction conditions and inexpensive catalytic system.

Acknowledgements

G.V.M. is thankful to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR), New Delhi for providing a senior research fellowship. The authors also thanks to Department of Science and 60 Technology (DST)-SERB, India (project file NO.SR/S1/OC-09-2012) for financial support.

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† Electronic Supplementary Information (ESI) available: general

experimental procedure, Copies of the ¹H and ¹³C NMR spectra and the Chiral HPLC chromatograms of the products.

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Synthesis of chiral fluorescence active probe and its application as an efficient catalyst in asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation of indole derivatives with nitroalkenes

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Green protocol for the asymmetric Friedel-Crafts alkylation using fluorescence active Zn(II) chiral catalyst with high conversion and enantiomeric excess has been developed.