

# Chapter 7: Multicomponent synthesis of functionalized 4*H*-pyrans

Swadhin Swaraj Acharya, Bibhuti Bhusan Parida\*

**Abstract:** 4*H*-Pyran nucleus is broadly distributed in many bioactive natural products and synthetic molecules. Therefore, huge attention has been devoted to synthesize functionalized 4*H*-pyrans. Multicomponent reactions (MCRs) are considered as greener alternatives to the traditional synthetic procedures, owing to several advantages such as pot-, and step-economy, high bond forming efficiency and no extra work-up steps. This chapter specifically highlights the multicomponent synthesis of medicinally relevant functional 4*H*-pyrans.

**Keywords:** 4*H*-pyran, multicomponent reactions (MCRs), one-pot reaction, step economy, green chemistry.

## 1 Introduction

Heterocycles (Walsh et al. 2015; Acharya et al. 2024; Acharya et al. 2024; Kumari et al. 2024; Acharya et al. 2024; Acharya et al. 2025) is the most important class of molecules broadly distributed in natural products, pharmaceuticals and bioactive molecules. Among the heterocycles, the *O*-heterocycle (Singh et al. 2018) occupies a special position. The pyran nucleus, (Auria-Luna et al. 2020; El-Khateeb et al. 2022) in this context is a celebrated scaffold owing to its natural abundance, and promising bioactivities.

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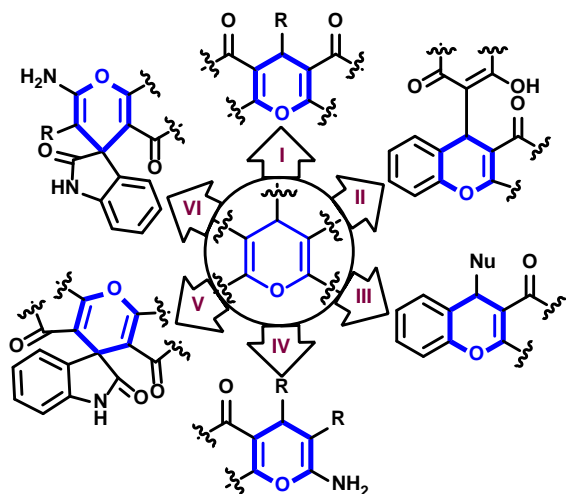
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**Fig. 3.** Various types of pyran derivatives synthesized by MCRs

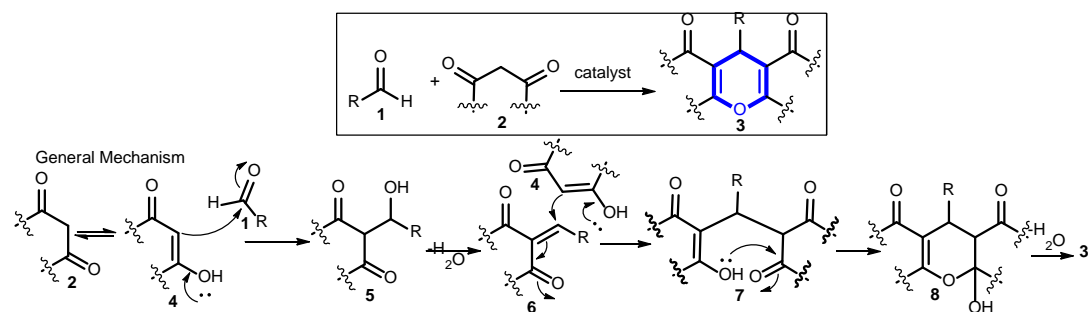
## 2 Methods and materials

The chapter includes the multicomponent synthetic approaches of functionalized pyrans and spiropyrans. The chapter discusses in detail various literatures available on pyrans and spiropyran synthesis.

## 3 Results and discussion

### 3.1 Multicomponent synthesis of functionalized pyrans

#### 3.1.1 From aldehyde and 1,3-dicarbonyl

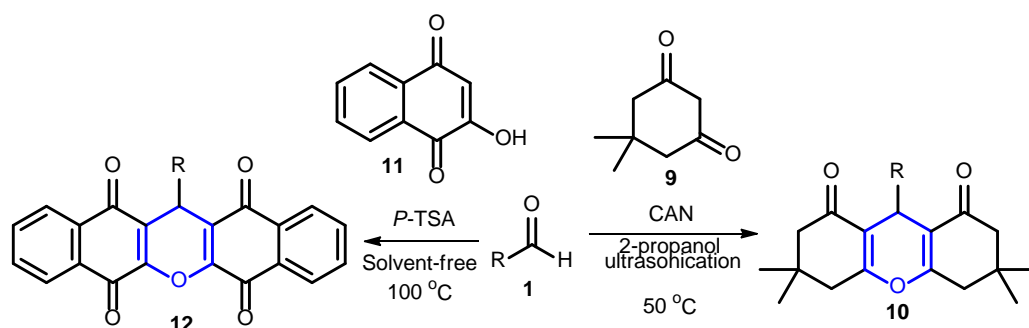


**Scheme 1.** General reaction scheme and mechanism of fully substituted 4*H*-pyran.

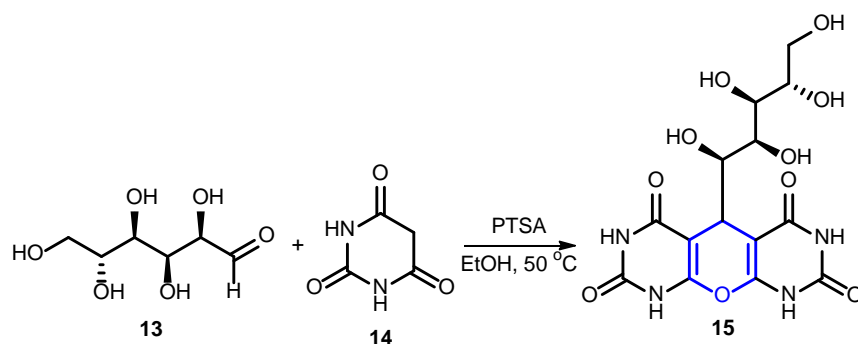
The one-pot reaction of an aldehyde with two 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds (same or different) forms a functionalized 4*H*-pyran **3** (Scheme 1). Typically acid-catalyzed, the reaction begins with condensation of the aldehyde **1** and a 1,3-dicarbonyl **2** to form a Michael acceptor **6**. This is then attacked by another 1,3-dicarbonyl **4**, leading to

intermediate **7**, which undergoes 6-*exo-trig* cyclization and dehydration to yield the pyran **3**.

Dimedone **9**, a 1,3-dicarbonyl compound, reacts with aldehydes in the presence of ceric ammonium nitrate (CAN), which activates the carbonyl group by coordination with  $Ce^{4+}$ . Under ultrasonic irradiation at 50 °C, this leads to the formation of pyran derivatives **10** (Mulakayala et al. 2012). Lawsone **11**, a natural compound from henna leaves, also contains a 1,3-dicarbonyl system (in enol form) (Acharya et al. 2025; Acharya et al. 2025). In the presence of *p*-toluenesulfonic acid (P-TSA), which protonates and activates the carbonyl, it undergoes a similar reaction to form pyran **12** (Scheme 2) (Tisseh et al. 2008).



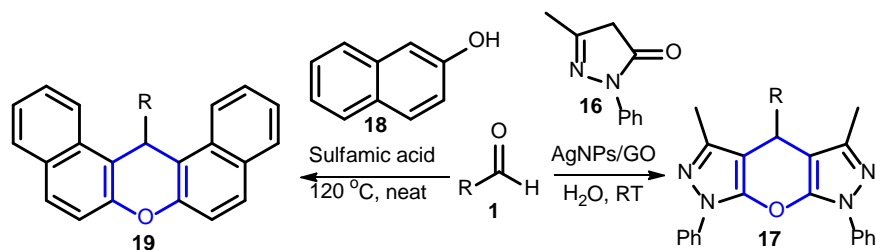
**Scheme 2.** Acid catalyzed synthesis of fused pyran **10**, and **11**.



**Scheme 3.** *P*-TSA catalyzed synthesis of pyran **15**.

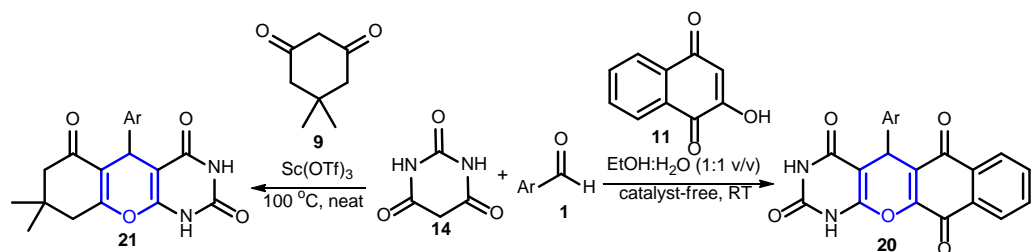
Barbituric acid **14**, a 1,3-dicarbonyl compound present in the core of many bioactive compounds. D-(+)-glucose **13**, also present in nature has an aldehyde group. In the presence of PTSA (Bronsted acid), they react to form the pyran **15** in ethanol at 50 °C (Scheme 3) (Nourisefat et al. 2014).

Apart from 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds there are also examples of compounds having acidic methylene groups, for example pyrazolone **16**, and  $\beta$ -naphthol **18**. The acidic methylene group in pyrazolone behaves same way as in 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds. The silver based nanocatalyst (AgNPs/GO), and sulfamic acid have been employed as acid catalysts for the synthesis of pyrans **17** and **19** (Scheme 4) (Dandia et al. 2017, Rajitha et al. 2005).



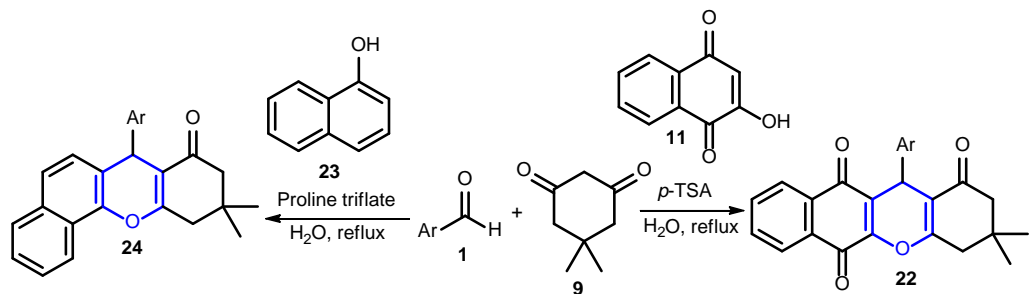
**Scheme 4.** Multicomponent synthesis of pyran **17**, and **19**.

Till now, the pseudo-multicomponent synthesis of fused pyran derivatives where one active methylene compound reacts twice has been discussed. Let us see the examples of some multicomponent reaction, where there are two different 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds have been utilized for the synthesis of fused pyrans **20** and **21** (Scheme 5) (Brahmachari et al. 2017, Kumari et al. 2019).



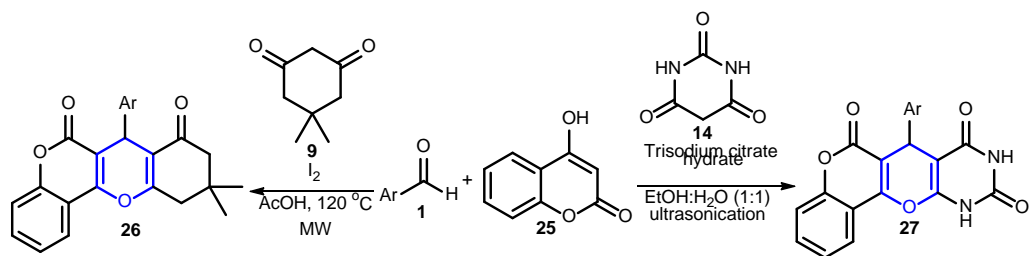
**Scheme 5.** Catalyst-free synthesis of pyran **20**, and **21**.

There are numerous reactions known where two different 1,3-dicarbonyls reacted to give interesting pyran derivatives in the presence of acid catalysts (Scheme 6) (Dabiri et al. 2010, Li et al. 2010).



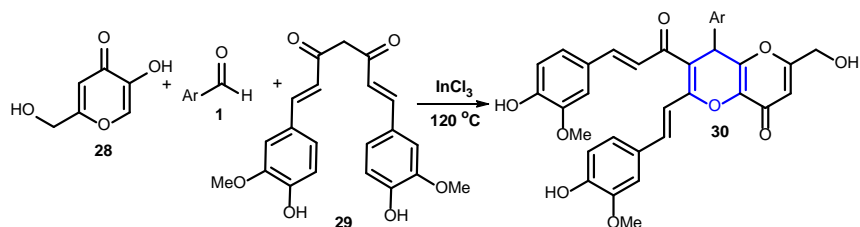
**Scheme 6.** PTSA catalyzed synthesis of pyran **22**.

4-Hydroxycoumarin **25** is a useful nucleus broadly found in the core of natural products, pharmaceuticals, and bioactive molecules (Borah et al. 2021). It also possesses 1,3-dicarbonyl functionality thus, it has also been explored in the synthesis of pyrans (Scheme 7) (Brahmachari et al. 2019, Sun et al. 2012).



**Scheme 7.** Iodine catalyzed synthesis of pyran **26**, and **27**.

Kojic acid **28** (Cook et al. 1945; Phasha et al. 2022) and curcumin **29** (Nicoliche et al. 2024; Dai et al. 2022) are bioactive natural products with 1,3-dicarbonyl functionality, making them useful in heterocycle synthesis (Borah et al. 2022; Chaudhary et al. 2020, Nagargoje et al. 2023). Kojic acid is known for skin-whitening properties, while curcumin shows broad biological activity. Using both as starting materials, benzopyran (**30**) was synthesized *via* a multicomponent reaction catalyzed by  $\text{InCl}_3$  under solvent-free conditions at 120 °C (Scheme 8) (Reddy et al. 2010).

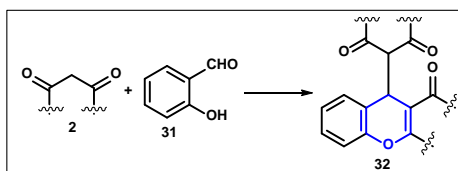


**Scheme 8.**  $\text{InCl}_3$  catalyzed synthesis of pyran **30**.

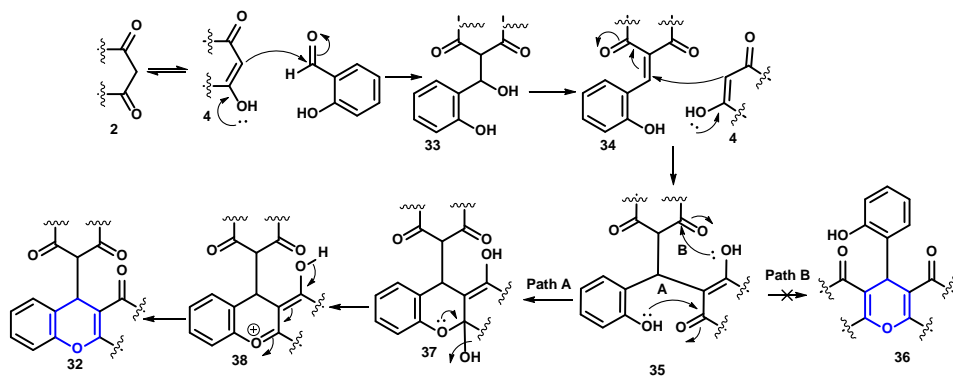
### 3.1.2. From salicylaldehyde with 1,3-dicarbonyl

In the above section, the aromatic aldehydes react with 1,3-dicarbonyls to provide the pyran where the carbonyls of the two active methylene are condensed. The reaction is different when there is a hydroxyl group at the *ortho*-position of the aromatic aldehyde. In the presence of *ortho*-OH group, the condensation takes place between the *ortho*-OH group and carbonyl group of the dicarbonyl (Scheme 9).

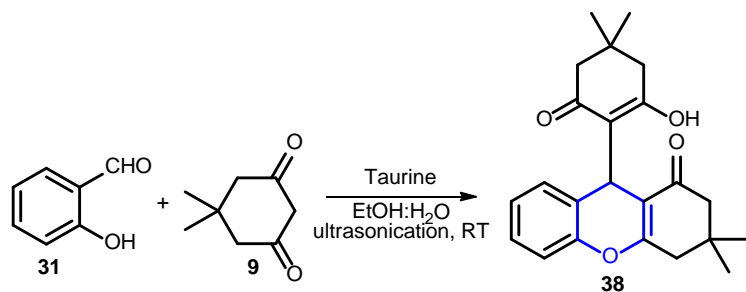
The salicylaldehyde is widely used for pyran synthesis owing to the presence of *ortho*-hydroxy group (Heravi et al. 2018). The reaction of salicylaldehyde and dimeredone in the presence of taurine, a  $\beta$ -amino sulfonic acid produced the benzopyran **38** in aqueous ethanol under ultrasonication irradiation at room temperature (Scheme 10) (Acharya et al. 2025).



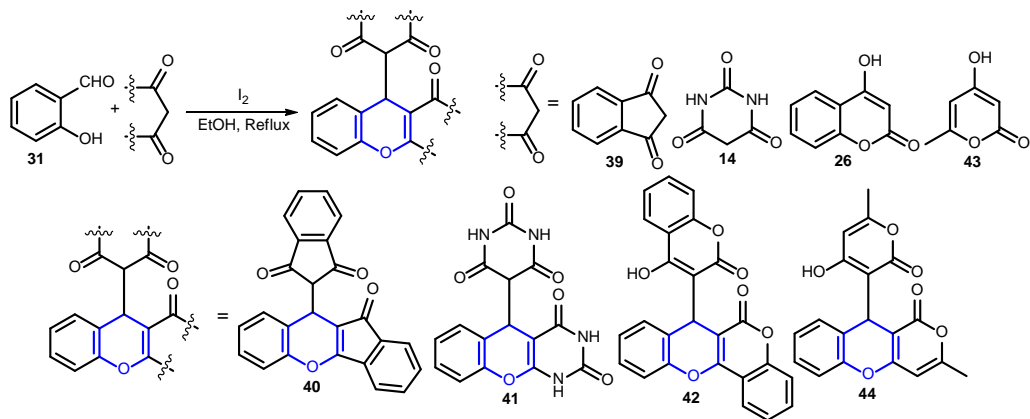
Mechanism:



**Scheme 9.** Reaction of salicylaldehydes with 1,3-dicarbonyls.



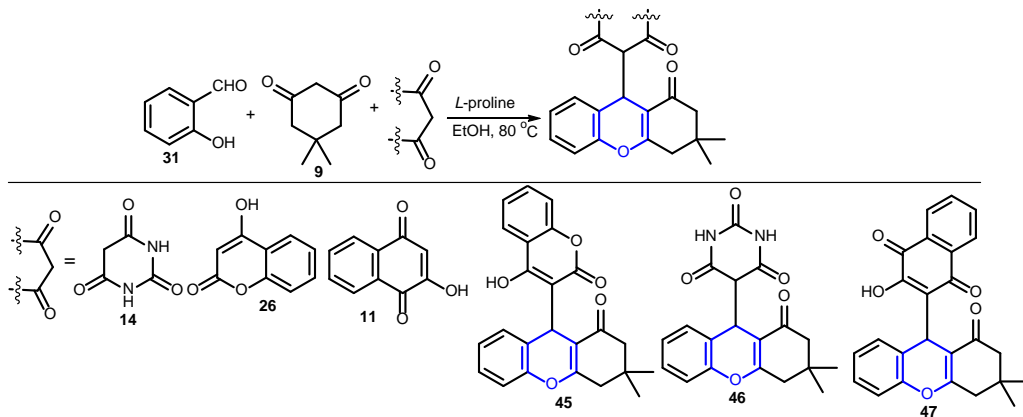
**Scheme 10.** Taurine catalyzed synthesis of pyran 38.



**Scheme 11.** Iodine catalyzed synthesis of pyrans 40-44.

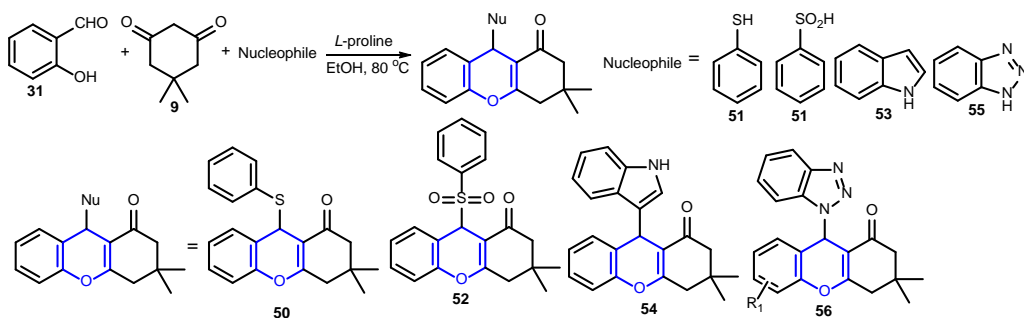
In the series other 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds have been explored and the similar results have been observed in the presence of iodine catalyst in ethanol under reflux conditions (Schemes 11) (Zeng et al. 2012).

Two different 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds can also provide the benzopyrans selectively. When salicylaldehyde reacts with two different 1,3-diketones in the presence of *L*-proline in ethanol at 80 °C (Scheme 12) (Li et al. 2012).



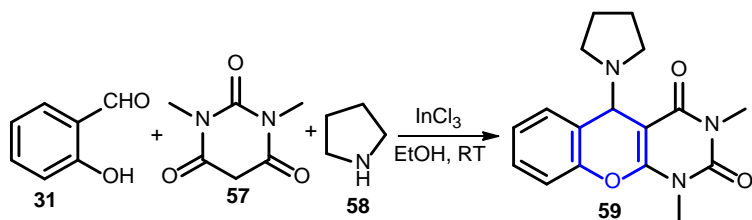
**Scheme 12.** *L*-proline catalyzed synthesis of pyrans **45-47**.

Besides 1,3-dicarbonyls, other nucleophiles also provide interesting pyran derivatives. In this case, salicylaldehyde at first react with 1,3-dicarbonyl compound to form the Michael acceptor **34**. Next, other nucleophiles attack in a conjugate manner to form interesting pyran derivatives (Scheme 14). This concept was applied for the synthesis of pyran derivatives **50**, **52**, **54**, **56**, and **59** by reacting thiophenol **49**, benzenesulfonic acid **51**, indole **53**, 1*H*-benzo[*d*][1,2,3]triazole **56**, and pyrrolidine **58** respectively (Scheme 13-14) ((Li et al. 2012; Sharma et al. 2015).



**Scheme 13.** *L*-proline catalyzed synthesis of pyran **52**.

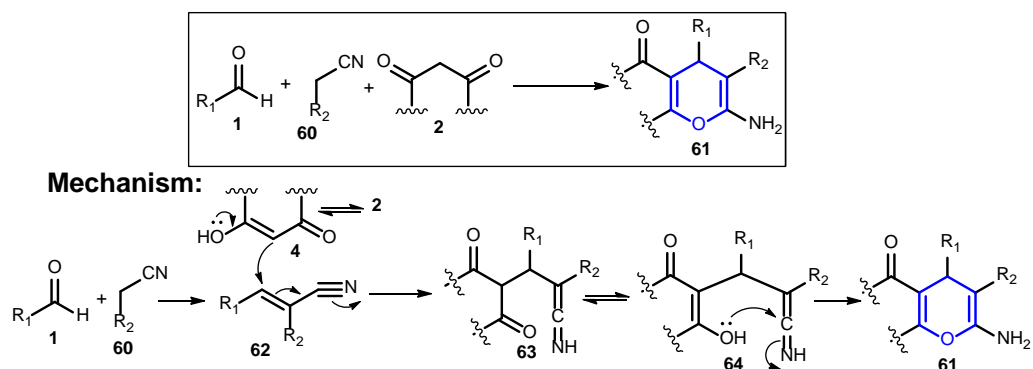




**Scheme 14.** *L*-proline catalyzed synthesis of pyran **59**.

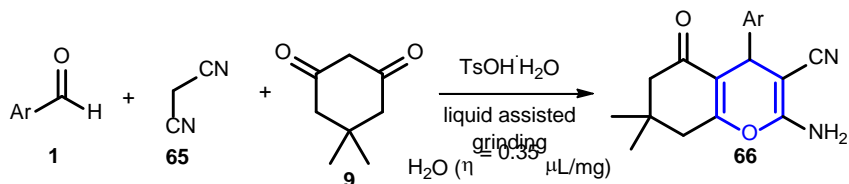
### 3.1.3. From aldehyde, 1,3-dicarbonyl and other active methylene compound

The aminopyrans are privileged molecules owing to their promising bioactivities. Apart from 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds there are other active methylene compounds those can perform the task. In this section, the multicomponent reaction of aldehyde, active methylene compound, and 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds for the synthesis of 2-aminopyrans have been discussed. The mechanism for the formation of aminopyran proceeds by the condensation of active methylene compound **60** and aldehyde **1** followed by the Michael attack of 1,3-dicarbonyl. Intramolecular cyclization then furnishes the aminopyran **61** (Scheme 15).



**Scheme 15.** General reaction and mechanism for the synthesis of pyran **61**.

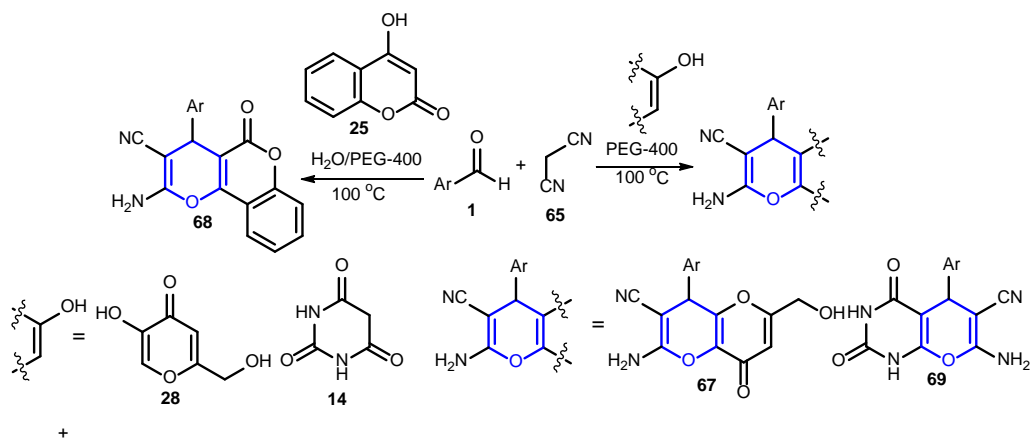
Aldehyde **1**, malononitrile **65**, and dimedone **9** were reacted in the presence of Bronsted acid TsOH·H<sub>2</sub>O resulted the aminopyran **66** (Scheme 16) (Borah et al. 2023).



**Scheme 16.** General reaction and mechanism for the synthesis of pyran **66**.

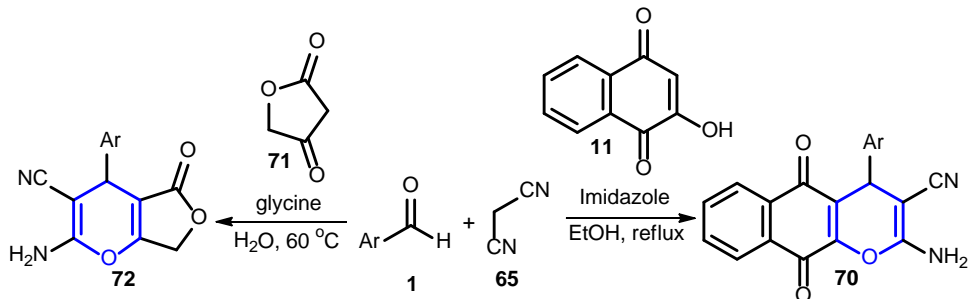
PEG-400 (polyethylene glycol) is considered as a green and sustainable solvent in modern organic synthesis since it is water soluble, biodegradable, non-toxic, inexpensive, readily available and recyclable. It activates the carbonyl group by

coordination thereby avoids the use of metal-based catalysts (Hasaninejad et al. 2018; Servesh et al. 2024; Raghu et al. 2013). In the presence of PEG-400, pyran **67**, **68** and **69** have been synthesized (Scheme 17) (Kale et al. 2024; Lü et al. 2018; Mohamadpour et al. 2020).



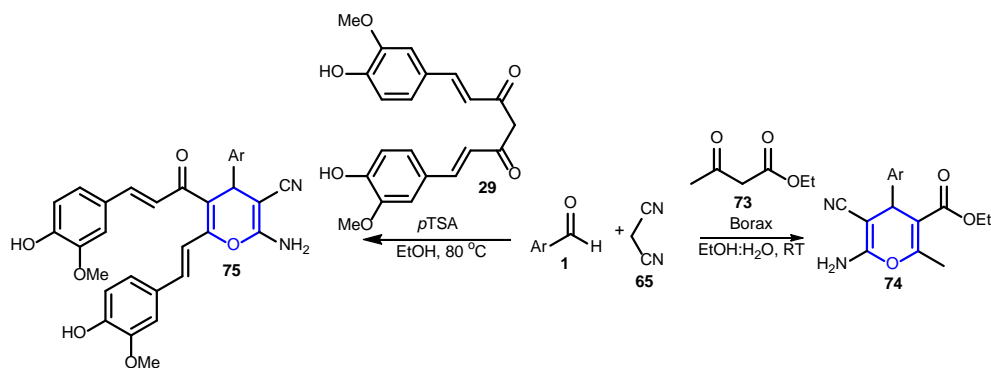
**Scheme 17.** PEG-400 mediated synthesis of pyran **67**.

The three-component reaction of aldehyde **1**, malononitrile **65**, with lawsone **11** and tetrone **71** in the presence of imidazole, and glycine respectively provided the pyran **70**, and **72** respectively (Scheme 18) (Khan et al. 2014, Singh et al. 2018).



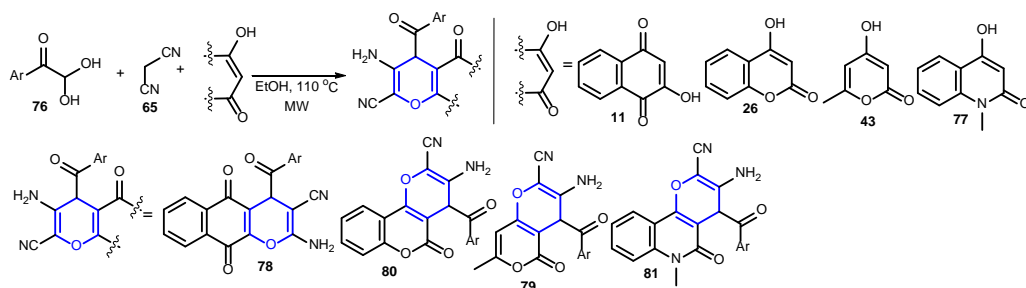
**Scheme 18.** Multicomponent synthesis of pyran **70**, and **72**.

Acyclic 1,3-dicarbonyl compounds have also been utilized in the synthesis of aminopyran **74** and **75** (Scheme 19) (Molla et al. 2013; Tavaf et al. 2020).



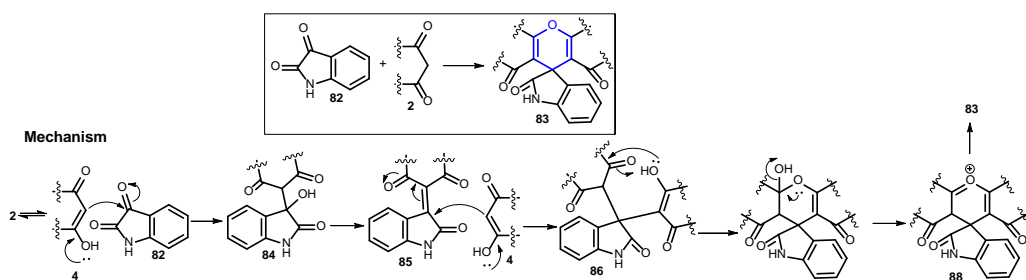
**Scheme 19.** Borax catalyzed synthesis of pyran **74**.

Till now, we have seen the multicomponent synthesis of 4-aryl pyrans, where the aryl moiety comes from the aldehyde. Other aldehydes have also been explored. The arylglyoxals have been utilized in the synthesis of 4-acylpyrans (Scheme 20) (Mishra et al. 2016).



**Scheme 20.** Multicomponent synthesis of 4-acylpyrans.

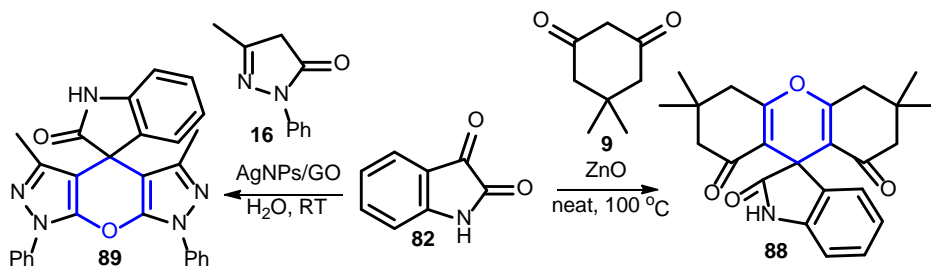
### 3.2. Synthesis of spiropyran



**Scheme 21.** Multicomponent synthesis of spiropyrans.

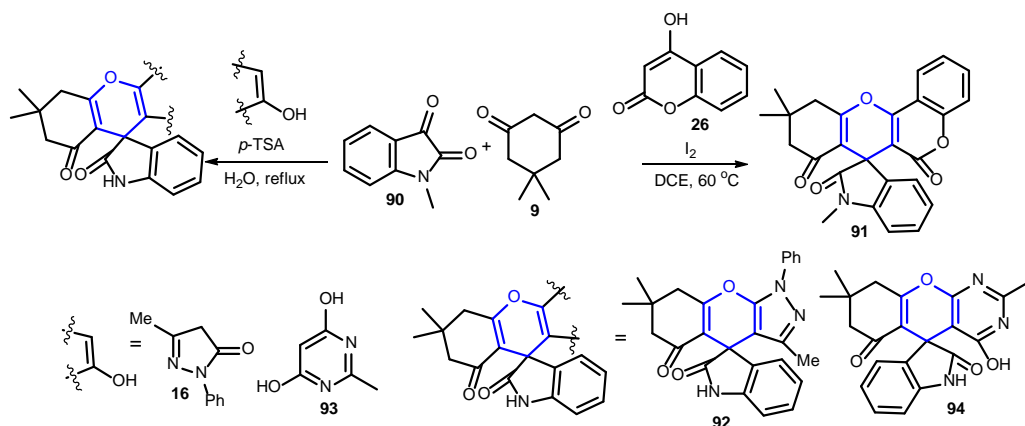
Along with aldehyde, there is another class of electrophile, called isatin, which has been widely utilized for the synthesis of spiro compounds. Isatin has also been utilized in the synthesis of spiropyrans as depicted in the Scheme 21. The isatin condenses with 1,3-dicarbonyl to form the Michael acceptor **85**, which is then attacked by another 1,3-dicarbonyl compound followed by intramolecular cyclization resulted the spiropyran **83** (Scheme 21).

Lewis acids have been explored for the synthesis of spiroopyran **88** and **89**, from the reaction of isatin **82**, with dimedone **9** and pyrazolone **16** respectively (Scheme 22) (Dandia et al. 2017, Kothandapani et al. 2016).



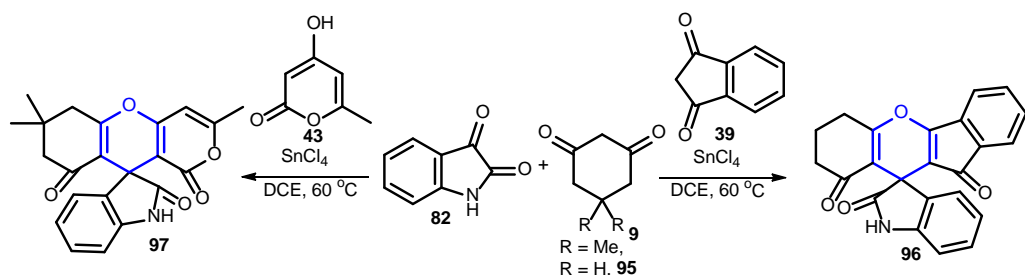
**Scheme 22.** ZnO catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyran **88**.

The reaction of isatin with two different 1,3-dicarbonyls provides the spiroopyran **90** in the presence of molecular iodine in DCE at 60 °C (Scheme 23) (Ghahremanzadeh et al. 2010, Zhang et al. 2018).

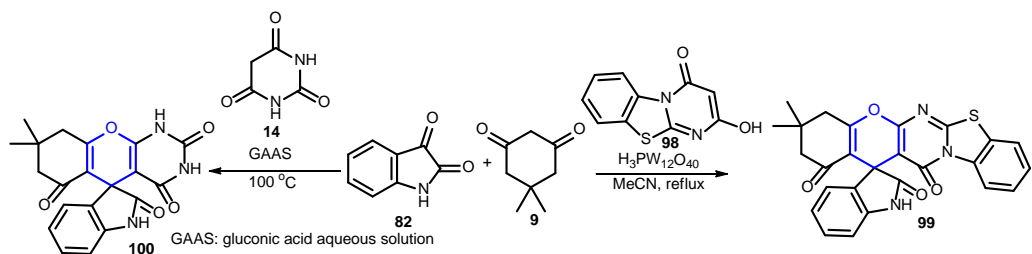


**Scheme 23.** *p*TSA catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyran **91**, **92**, and **94**.

There are some examples of multicomponent spiroopyrans employing several acid catalysts displayed in Scheme 24-25 (Liang et al. 2010; Jannati et al. 2018; Guo et al. 2013).

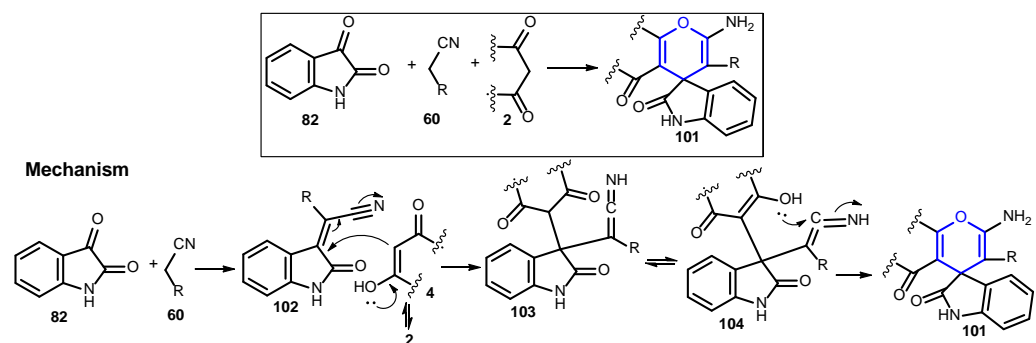


**Scheme 24.** SnCl<sub>4</sub> catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyran **96**, and **97**.



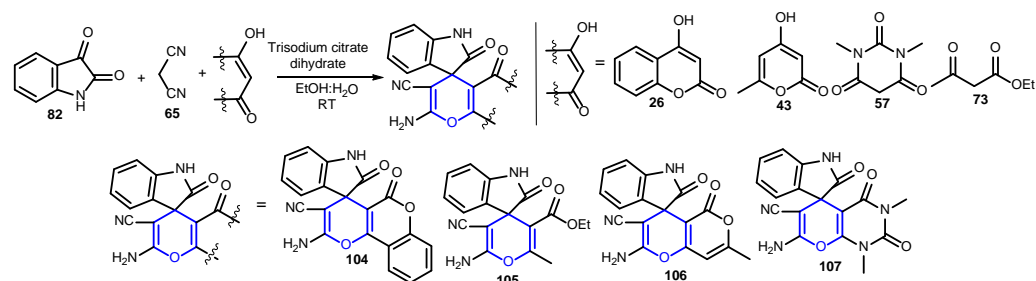
**Scheme 25.**  $H_3PW_{12}O_{40}$  catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyran **99**.

The reaction of isatin **82**, 1,3-dicarbonyl compound **2** and malononitrile provides the 2-aminospiropyran **101** proceeds via the initial Michael acceptor formation followed by the conjugate attack of 1,3-dicarbonyl and subsequent intramolecular cyclization (Scheme 26).



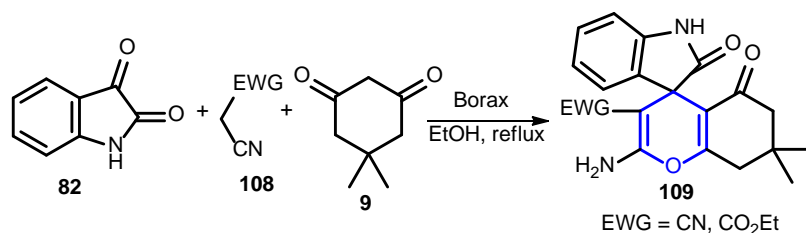
**Scheme 26.** Reaction scheme and mechanism spiroopyran **101**.

Isatin and malononitrile reacts to form the Michael acceptor, which then reacts with several cyclic and acyclic 1,3-dicarbonyls to form the spiroopyrans **104**, **105**, **106**, and **107** (Scheme 27) (Brahmachari et al. 2016).



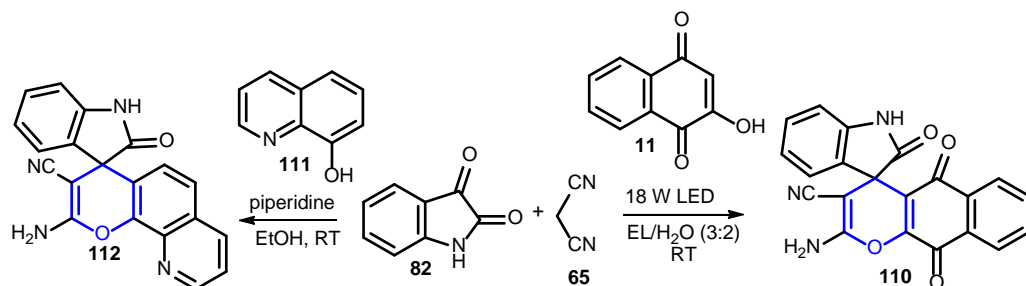
**Scheme 27.** Trisodium citrate dihydrate catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyrans.

Isatin, malononitrile, and dimedone in the presence of borax in ethanol forms spiroopyran **109** under reflux conditions (Scheme 28) (Molla et al. 2018).



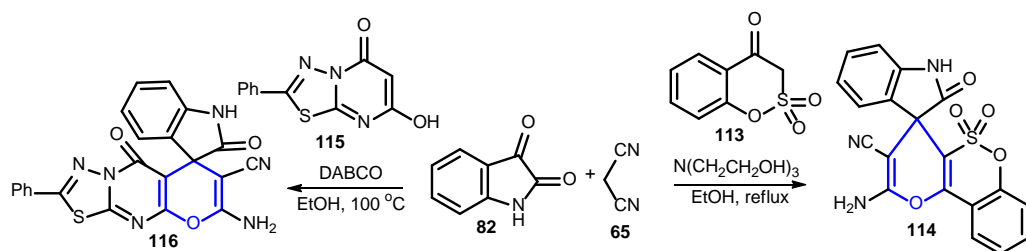
**Scheme 28.** Borax catalyzed synthesis of spiroopyran **109**.

Visible light mediated organic synthesis is one of the greener alternatives to the traditional organic synthesis. The visible-light mediated reaction of isatin, malononitrile, and lawsone forms the spiroopyran **110** (Scheme 29) (Zhang et al. 2017). Isatin **82**, malononitrile **65**, and quinolin-8-ol **111** provided spiroopyran **112** in the presence of piperidine in ethanol at room temperature (Scheme 29) (Shi et al. 2016).



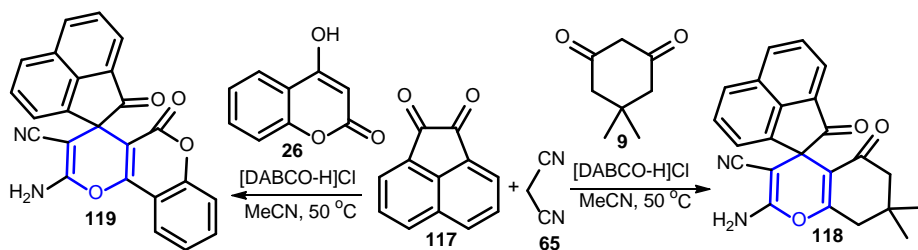
**Scheme 29.** Visible-light mediated synthesis of spiroopyran **110**, and **112**.

1,2-Benzoxathiin-4(3*H*)-one 2,2-dioxide **113**, and 7-hydroxy-2-phenyl-5*H*-[1,3,4]thiadiazolo[3,2-*a*]pyrimidin-5-one **115** are interesting active methylene compounds, have been explored in the synthesis of spiroopyrans **114** and **116** (Scheme 30) (Grygoriv et al. 2019).

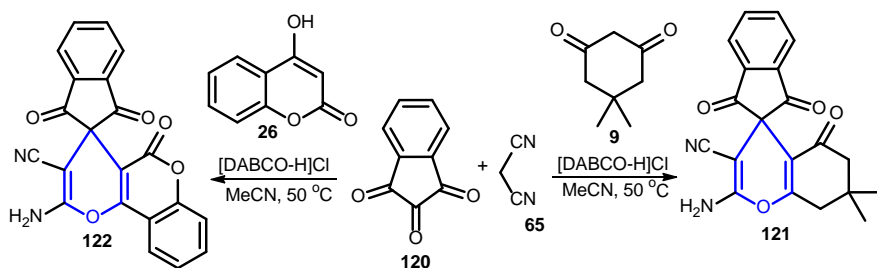


**Scheme 30.** Multicomponent synthesis of spiroopyran **114**, and **116**.

Apart from isatin, other molecules can also form spiroopyrans. The acenaphthylene-1,2-dione **117**, and ninhydrin **120** can also provide the spiroopyrans (Scheme 31-32) (Li et al. 2018).



**Scheme 31.** Acenaphthylene-1,2-dione in the synthesis of spiropyran **118** and **119**.



**Scheme 32.** Ninhydrin in the synthesis of spiropyran **121** and **122**.

## Conclusions

The 4*H*-pyran is a privileged nucleus broadly found in natural product, and bioactive molecules. There are several approaches for the synthesis of 4*H*-pyrans. In this chapter, six types of multicomponent reactions have been discussed with various interesting examples, which will provide valuable insights to the readers and researchers.

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