

Table of Contents

1. Introduction.....	2
1.1. Introduction to Fluorescence.....	2
1.2. Fluorescent Dyes.....	3
1.2.1. A Brief History of Fluorescent Dyes.....	3
1.2.2. Role of Fluorescent Dyes in Fluorescence Imaging.....	4
1.2.3. Fluorophores and Auxochromes.....	5
1.2.4. Properties of an Ideal Fluorophore.....	7
1.2.5. Role of Auxochromes in Modulating Fluorogenic and Physicochemical Properties of Various Fluorophores.....	8
1.3. Fluorescent Probes and their Role in Bioimaging.....	12
1.3.1. Recent Developments in Fluorescent Probes: Applications and Drawbacks.....	13
1.4. Conclusion.....	14
1.5. References.....	15
2. Problem Statement and Objective of Research.....	23
2.1. Problem Statement and Research Gap.....	23
2.2. Research Objectives.....	23
3. Exploration of Auxochromic Properties of Ring-Fused Azacyclic Groups and their Application.....	27
3.1. Coumarin-Fused-Azacyclic Group: Synthesis, Photophysical Properties and Cellular Compatibility Studies.....	27
3.1.1. Background and Rationale.....	27
3.1.2. Results and Discussion.....	28
3.2. Coumarin-Fused-Azacyclic Group: Application in the Synthesis of Turn-On Fluorescent Probe for Hydrogen Peroxide Detection.....	34
3.2.1. Rationale for synthesis of H ₂ O ₂ -detecting probe.....	34
3.2.2. Results and Discussion.....	35

3.3. Conclusion.....	42
3.4. Experimental Section.....	43
3.4.1. Materials and methods.....	43
3.4.2. Photophysical Characterization of compounds 5, 5a, 6 and 7.....	44
3.4.3. Quantum Yield (ϕ_f) Measurement.....	45
3.4.4. pH stability study.....	45
3.4.5. Photostability study.....	46
3.4.6. <i>In vitro</i> cytotoxicity testing of compound 6 using MTT assay.....	46
3.4.7. Intracellular uptake assay of compound 6.....	47
3.4.8. UV-VIS and fluorescence measurements of probe PYCB.....	47
3.4.9. <i>In vitro</i> cytotoxicity testing of PYCB using MTT assay.....	48
3.4.10. Fluorescence imaging of PYCB-treated MCF-7 cells.....	48
3.4.11. Synthetic Procedures and Spectral Data.....	49
3.4.12. References.....	53
4. Exploration of Auxochromic Effects of Alicyclic Amines on Coumarin Fluorophore.....	58
4.1. Background and Rationale.....	58
4.2. Results and Discussion.....	60
4.2.1. Synthesis of desired compounds.....	60
4.2.2. Photophysical Characterization of Molecules.....	64
4.2.3. Theoretical explanation of findings using DFT studies.....	66
4.2.4. pH Stability and Photostability Studies of molecules.....	68
4.2.5. Biocompatibility Assay, Cellular Uptake and Fluorescence Imaging Studies on Molecules.....	69
4.3. Conclusion.....	71
4.4. Experimental Section.....	72
4.4.1. Materials and Methods.....	72
4.4.2. Photophysical Characterization.....	73

4.4.3. Absolute Quantum Yield Measurement.....	73
4.4.4. Computational Studies.....	73
4.4.5. pH Stability and Photostability Studies.....	74
4.4.6. Cell culture and conditions.....	74
4.4.7. <i>In vitro</i> Cytotoxicity assay.....	75
4.4.8. Intracellular uptake studies in cells and evaluation of light emission at different time intervals.....	75
4.4.9. Synthesis and characterization of compounds.....	76
4.5. References.....	85
5. Demonstration of Auxochromic Effects of Alicyclic Amines on Naphthalimide and Nitrobenzoxadiazole Fluorophores.....	88
5.1. Background and Rationale.....	88
5.2. Results and Discussion.....	89
5.2.1. Synthesis of target molecules.....	89
5.2.2. Photophysical Characterization of target molecules.....	91
5.2.3. Theoretical explanation of findings using DFT studies.....	93
5.2.4. pH Stability and Photostability Studies of molecules.....	95
5.2.5. Biocompatibility Assay of molecules in both cancer and non-cancer cells.....	96
5.2.6. Cellular Uptake and Fluorescence Imaging Studies on molecules.....	98
5.3. Conclusion.....	99
5.4. Experimental section.....	99
5.4.1. Materials and methods.....	99
5.4.2. Photophysical Characterisation.....	100
5.4.3. Absolute Quantum Yield (ϕ) Measurement.....	101
5.4.4. Computational chemistry.....	101
5.4.5. pH stability and Photostability study.....	102
5.4.6. Cell culture and conditions.....	102

5.4.7. Biocompatibility assay of compounds 5, 5b, 6 and 6b in cancer and non-cancer cells.....	102
5.4.8. Fluorescence imaging of treated cells and intracellular uptake assay.....	103
5.4.9. Synthetic procedures of compounds 5-5e and 6-6e.....	104
5.4.10. Spectral data of compounds 5-5e and 6-6e.....	105
5.5. References.....	112
6. Application of Alicyclic Auxochrome in Synthesis of Glutathione-Detecting Ratiometric Fluorescent Probe.....	114
6.1. Background and Rationale.....	114
6.2. Results and Discussion.....	116
6.2.1. Synthesis of probe NAPB.....	116
6.2.2. Sensing Mechanism and Selectivity of probe NAPB to GSH.....	117
6.2.3. UV- VIS characterization of probe NAPB in response to GSH.....	119
6.2.4. Concentration-based Response of NAPB towards GSH.....	120
6.2.5. Time-based Response to GSH and pH Stability Study of NAPB.....	121
6.2.6. Biocompatibility Assay and In vitro Cellular Imaging of NAPB in cancer cells.....	122
6.3. Conclusion.....	124
6.4. Experimental section.....	124
6.4.1. Materials and methods.....	124
6.4.2. Step-wise synthesis of probe NAPB.....	125
6.4.3. Reaction of NAPB with biothiols (GSH and Cys).....	127
6.4.4. Control experiment with <i>N</i> -Propylmaleimide (NPM).....	127
6.4.5. UV-VIS and fluorescence measurements of probe NAPB.....	127
6.4.6. <i>In vitro</i> cytotoxicity testing of NAPB using MTT assay.....	127
6.4.7. Fluorescence imaging of NAPB-treated HepG2 cells.....	128
6.4.8. Spectral data of NAPB.....	128
6.5. References.....	129

7. Summary, Conclusion and Future Perspectives.....	133
7.1. Summary and Conclusion of Work.....	133
7.2. Future Prospects.....	136
Appendix.....	138

Table of Figures

Figure 1.1. Jablonski (electronic transitions) diagram. Adapted from Ref. [2].....	3
Figure 1.2. The timeline illustrating the emergence and steady advancement of fluorescent dyes over the years. Adapted from Ref. [4].....	4
Figure 1.3. Classical fluorescent dyes used for imaging of cells and various cell organelles.....	6
Figure 1.4. Examples of various classes of fluorophores found in dyes used for bioimaging.....	7
Figure 1.5. Chronological modification of auxochromes on coumarins.....	10
Figure 1.6. Jablonski diagram showing the process of twisted intramolecular charge transfer (TICT) in compounds 1c and 1d.....	11
Figure 1.7. Chronological modification of auxochromes on 1,8-naphthalimide.....	11
Figure 1.8. Chronological modification of auxochromes on 4-nitrobenzoxadiazole.....	12
Figure 1.9. Examples of coumarin-based fluorescent probes used for the detection of various analytes.....	14
Figure 1.10. Examples of 1,8-naphthalimide and 4-nitrobenzoxadiazole-based fluorescent probes used for the detection of various analytes.....	14
Figure 2.1. An illustration depicting the problem statement and the potential gap in the concerned research field.....	24
Figure 2.2. Illustration demonstrating the aim and objective of the research.....	25
Figure 3.1. (a)The gradual advent of novel auxochromes reported in the literature; and (b) Demonstration of objectives of current work.....	28
Figure 3.2. (a) Normalised absorbance intensities and (b) normalised fluorescence emission intensities of compounds 5-7 in PBS.....	31
Figure 3.3. (a) pH stability study of compound 6 in a pH range of 4-8, and (b) Photostability study of compound 6 measured in terms of change of fluorescence intensity in comparison to 2a and coumarin 6 with time (0 – 360 minutes).....	32

Figure 3.4. (a) Measurement of percentage of viability of MCF-7 cells incubated with compound 6 at various concentrations ranging from 10 μM to 100 μM ; (b) Measurement of percentage of viability of HEK-293 cells incubated with compound 6 at various concentrations ranging from 10 μM to 100 μM	33
Figure 3.5. Average fluorescence intensity of compound 6 with respect to control determined through flow cytometry in MCF-7 cell lines after 30 minutes of incubation at 20 μM concentration.....	33
Figure 3.6. The design strategy of azacoumarin-based H_2O_2 -susceptible fluorescent probe (PYCB).....	34
Figure 3.7. Proposed Mechanism for Detection of H_2O_2 by PYCB.....	36
Figure 3.8. (a) UV-vis absorption and (b) fluorescence emission spectra of PYCB (2 μM) in 25 mM PBS mixed with DMSO in a ratio of 8:2 (pH 7.4), before and after the addition of H_2O_2 (5 μM in PBS) (λ_{ex} : 350 nm).....	37
Figure 3.9. (a) Fluorescence responses of PYCB (2 μM) to various concentrations of H_2O_2 (0-200 μM); (b) The linear correlation between the fluorescence intensity at 460 nm and H_2O_2 concentration (5-100 μM); (c) Time-dependent fluorescence response of PYCB (2 μM) to H_2O_2 (5 μM); (d) Total time of response of PYCB to H_2O_2 (5 μM) at 460 nm.....	38
Figure 3.10. Time-based response of PYCB (2 μM) to increasing concentrations of H_2O_2 (5-100 μM) at 460 nm. over a total time period of 3 h where the probe reaches maximum equilibrium at about 2 h in the presence of H_2O_2 at all possible concentrations.....	39
Figure 3.11. (a) Evaluation of the stability of probe PYCB (10 mM) to change in pH (2-8) at $\lambda_{\text{em}} = 460 \text{ nm}$ (λ_{ex} : 350 nm); (b) Fluorescence response of PYCB (2 μM) to various competing species (5 μM) and H_2O_2 (5 μM)	40
Figure 3.12. Measurement of percentage of viability of MCF-7 cells incubated with probe PYCB at various concentrations ranging from 2.5 μM to 100 μM	41
Figure 3.13. Fluorescent, bright-field and merged images of MCF-7 cells treated with probe PYCB in absence and presence of exogenous H_2O_2 as well as inhibitor NAC.....	42

Figure 4.1. (a) Previous work depicting fluorescent coumarin analogues containing electron-donating hydroxy (1), amino (2), diethylamino (3), azetidino (4), and aziridino (5) rings as reported in the literature and (b) current work objective depicting incorporation of cycloalkylamines as auxochromes at the 7th position of 4-methylcoumarin to synthesize target molecules.....	59
Figure 4.2. (a) Fluorescence emission peaks for compounds 6-9 in comparison with 4. (b) Mono- and di-substituted alkyl amine (compounds 10-18) emission wavelength in comparison with 4.....	64
Figure 4.3. Illustrations of (a) 2D chemical structure, (b) top view and (c) side view of excited state geometries (S_1) and (d) HOMO (highest occupied molecular orbital) and LUMO (lowest unoccupied molecular orbital) electron densities of compounds 4 and 6-9 in water using TD-DFT/B3LYP 6-31++g(d, p) method along with the IEFPCM model of Gaussian 09 software.....	68
Figure 4.4. (a, b) Evaluation of the stability of compounds 7 and 8 in response to pH as compared to their reference standard 4, respectively; (c, d) Photostability tests of compounds 7 and 8 in comparison to standard 4, respectively using coumarin 6 as the reference dye.....	69
Figure 4.5. Measurement of percentage of viability of (a) MDA-MB-231 cancer cells and (b) HEK-293 normal cells incubated with compounds 4, 7 and 8 at various concentrations ranging from 10 μ M to 100 μ M for 24 h.....	70
Figure 4.6. Fluorescence images of MDA-MB-231 cells after incubation with dyes 4, 7 and 8 at a concentration of 75 μ M for 12 h at 37 $^{\circ}$ C.....	71
Figure 4.7. The fluorescence intensity of compounds 4, 7, and 8 were determined through flow cytometry against MDA-MB-231 cell lines after 30 min of incubation.....	72
Figure 5.1. (a) Demonstration of benefits of cycloalkyl amine auxochromes on coumarin fluorophore as compared to traditional hydroxyl (1a), amine (1b) and azetidino (2) auxochromes. (b) Current objective depicting the evaluation of alicyclic auxochromes on naphthalimide (5a-5e) and nitrobenzoxadiazole (6a-6e) fluorophores in comparison to their corresponding azetidinylated counterparts (5 and 6, respectively), treated as standard.....	89

Figure 5.2. (a,b) Normalised absorption and fluorescence emission peaks of compounds 5a-5e in PBS in comparison to 5; (c,d) Normalised absorption and fluorescence emission peaks of compounds 6a-6e in PBS in comparison to 6.....	92
Figure 5.3. Illustrations of (a) 2D representation, (b) top view and (c) side view of theoretically optimized molecular structures of 5, 5b, 6 and 6b in water in singlet excited state (S_1); (d) HOMO (highest occupied molecular orbital) and LUMO (lowest unoccupied molecular orbital) electron densities of 5, 5b, 6 and 6b in water in singlet excited state (S_1) calculated based on the optimized molecular structures in the S_0 state.....	95
Figure 5.4. (a, b) Evaluation of the stability of compounds 5b and 6b in response to pH as compared to their reference standards 5 and 6, respectively; (c, d) Photostability tests of compounds 5b and 6b in comparison to standards 5 and 6, respectively, using coumarin 6 as the reference dye.....	96
Figure 5.5. Cell viability assay of (a, c) compounds 5 and 5b, and (b, d) compounds 6 and 6b against MDA-MB-231 and HEK-293 cells, respectively, at various concentration ranging from 10 μ M to 100 μ M.....	97
Figure 5.6. Illustration of fluorescence displayed by dyes 5, 5b, 6 and 6b in MDA-MB-231 cell line captured with the help of inverted fluorescence phase contrast microscope at 400X magnification.....	98
Figure 5.6. Comparison of average fluorescence intensity of dyes 5, 5b, 6 and 6b with respect to control determined through flow cytometry in MDA-MB-231 cell lines after 30 minutes of incubation at 10 μ M concentration.....	99
Figure 6.1. Illustration of application of cyclobutylaminated naphthalimide in designing a fluorescent probe NAPB for effective detection of GSH.....	116
Figure 6.2. UV-VIS absorption spectra (a) and fluorescence emission spectra (b) of NAPB (in phosphate buffer mixed with DMSO in a ratio of 8:2, pH 8.5) before and after the addition of Glutathione (GSH) (1 equiv. in PBS)	119
Figure 6.3. Fluorescence responses of NAPB (1.25 μ M) to various concentrations of GSH (0 - 20 equiv.) when excited at $\lambda_{ex} = 345$ nm (a) and $\lambda_{ex} = 445$ nm (b), respectively; (c) Fluorescence intensities of NAPB (1.25 μ M) at 451 nm and 549 nm in response to increasing concentrations of GSH (0-20 equiv.) when excited at $\lambda_{ex} = 345$ nm and $\lambda_{ex} = 445$ nm, respectively; (d) GSH	

concentration-based response curve of NAPB shows linear relationship within a concentration range of 0-10 equiv.....121

Figure 6.4. (a) Time-dependent fluorescence response of NAPB (1.25 μ M) to GSH (1 equiv.) at 549 nm. λ_{ex} : 445 nm); (b) Evaluation of the stability of probe NAPB (1.25 μ M) to changes in pH (4-8) at λ_{em} = 549 nm (λ_{ex} : 445 nm).....122

Figure 6.5. (a) Measurement of percent viability of HepG2 liver cancer cells incubated with probe NAPB at various concentrations ranging from 1 μ M to 10 μ M using MTT assay. (b) Fluorescent and merged images of HepG2 cells when treated with probe NAPB in the absence and presence of exogenous GSH and NPM.....123

Figure 7.1. Illustration depicting the fundamental aspects of our work.....137

List of schemes and tables

Scheme 3.1. Synthesis of azacoumarin derivatives 5, 5a, 6 and 7.....	29
Scheme 3.2. Synthesis of azacoumarin-based H ₂ O ₂ -susceptible fluorescent probe PYCB from compound 6.....	35
Scheme 4.1. Synthesis of 4-methyl-7-cyclopropylamino coumarin (6) using 4-methyl umbelliferone-7-triflate (1a) as intermediate.....	60
Scheme 4.2. Synthesis of 4-methyl-7-cyclopropylamino coumarin (6) using 4-methyl umbelliferone-7-nonaflate (1a') as intermediate.....	61
Scheme 4.3. Substrate scope of various amines for Buchwald-Hartwig coupling with 1a'.....	63
Scheme 4.4. Gram scale synthesis of compound 8.....	63
Scheme 5.1. Synthesis of naphthalimide derivatives 5 and 5a-5e.....	90
Scheme 5.2. Synthesis of 4-nitrobenzoxadiazole derivatives 6 and 6a-6e.....	90
Scheme 6.1. Synthesis of NAPB from NCB.....	117
Scheme 6.2. Nucleophilic reactions of probe NAPB.....	118
Table 3.1. Photophysical properties of compounds 5, 5a, 6 and 7.....	30
Table 4.1. Optimization conditions of reaction for synthesis of compound 6 from intermediate 1a.....	62
Table 4.2. Photophysical properties of compounds 4 and 6-19 in PBS.....	65-66
Table 5.1. Photophysical properties of synthesized compounds in PBS.....	92-93

List of abbreviations

Abbreviation	Full Form
S_0	Singlet ground electronic level
S_1	Lowest excited state
T_1	Triplet excited state
λ_{abs}	Maximum absorption wavelength
λ_{em}	Maximum emission wavelength
λ_{ex}	Excitation maximum
FITC	Fluorescein isothiocyanate
BODIPY	Boron dipyrromethene
DAPI	4',6'-diamino-2-phenylindole
TMR	Tetramethylrhodamine
ϵ	molar absorptivity
Φ_f / ϕ_f	Quantum yield/ Fluorescence quantum yield
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
-OH	Hydroxyl group
-NH₂	Amino group
TICT	Twisted intramolecular charge transfer
LYSA	Lyophilization solubility assay
Cys	Cysteine
Hey	Homocysteine
GSH	Glutathione
DMSO	Dimethylsulfoxide
DCM	Dichloromethane
PBS	Phosphate buffered saline

MeOH	Methanol
ACN	Acetonitrile
conc.	Concentrated
cat.	Catalytic
LOD	Limit of detection
μM	Micromolar
mM	Millimolar
μm	Micrometer
nm	Nanometer
NAC	<i>N</i> -acetyl cysteine
NPM	<i>N</i> -propyl maleimide
TMS	Tetramethylsilane
NMR	Nuclear Magnetic Resonance
ppm	Parts per million
UV	Ultraviolet
MTT	3-(4,5-dimethylthiazol-2-yl)-2,5 diphenyltetrazolium bromide
FBS	Fetal Bovine Serum
EDTA	Ethylenediaminetetraacetic acid
HRMS	High-resolution Mass spectrophometer
ESI	Electron Spray Ionisation