An aromatic nucleophilic substitution in organic chemistry may simply be defined as a chemical reaction where the nucleophile displaces a good leaving group, such as a halide, on an aromatic ring. The aromatic nucleophilic substitution can primarily occur via three different routes as given below.

**ArSN₁ or Aryl Cation Mechanism**

The unimolecular nucleophilic substitution on aromatic rings is mainly given by aromatic diazonium salts. The typical reaction of such type is given below.

**Illustrative reaction:** The typical reaction involving nucleophilic substitution in aromatic compounds is shown below.

\[
\text{N}_2^+ + \text{Nu}^- \rightarrow \text{Nu} + \text{N}_2
\]

**Mechanism involved:** The proposed mechanism for the reaction given above involves two steps which must be discussed before we give salient features of the same.

1. **Formation of aryl cation:** Now although the aryl carbocation is highly unstable, its formation is still favored due to the high stability of dinitrogen (i.e., good leaving group).

\[
\text{N}_2^+ \rightarrow \text{Nu}^+ + \text{N}_2
\]

Now although the aryl carbocation is highly unstable, its formation is still favored due to the high stability of dinitrogen (i.e., good leaving group).

2. **Attack by the Nucleophile:**
Salient Features: The main features of the mechanism involved in aromatic nucleophilic substitution unimolecular or ArSN₁ type reactions are given below.

i) ArSN₁ reactions follow first-order kinetics with the rate law

\[ \text{Rate} = k[RX] \]

Where \( k \) is the rate constant and \([RX]\) represents the molar concentration of the substrate.

ii) The presence of +R groups at ortho and para positions raises the reactivity of the substrate and vice-versa.

➢ ArSN₂ or Addition-Elimination Mechanism

The bimolecular nucleophilic substitution on aromatic rings is most common among the class. The typical reaction of such type is given below.

Illustrative reaction: The typical reaction involving this type of mechanism is given below.

Mechanism involved: The proposed mechanism for the reaction given above involves two steps which must be discussed before we give salient features of the same.

i) ipso-addition of the nucleophile:

Now although an ion is no longer an aromatic species; however, it is relatively stable due to the delocalization of the negative charge over 3 carbon atoms by the pi system.

ii) Elimination of the leaving group:
**Salient Features:** The main features of the mechanism involved in aromatic nucleophilic substitution bimolecular or ArSN$_2$ type reactions are given below.

1. ArSN$_2$ reactions follow second-order kinetics with the rate law 
   $$\text{Rate} = k[RX][Nu]$$
   Where $k$ is the rate constant. The symbol $[RX]$ and $[Nu]$ represent the molar concentration of the substrate and attacking nucleophiles, respectively.

2. The reactivity increases as the leaving group gets better.

3. The rate of the substitution increases as the $-I$ or $-R$ effect of the groups attached $o$- and $p$-positions increases.

4. The reactivity is also proportional to the electronegativity of the heteroatom (if any) in the ring.

5. The ArSN$_2$ reactions are favored in polar aprotic solvents.

**Aryne (Benzyne) or Elimination-Addition Mechanism**

The elimination-addition mechanism involves a highly unstable intermediate called benzyne (dehydrobenzene). A typical reaction of such type is given below.

**Illustrative reaction:**

Steps involved: The proposed mechanism for the reaction given above involves two steps which must be discussed before we give salient features of the same.

1. First step is the elimination of proton ortho to the substituent present and formation of benzyne:

   ![Cl](image1)

   ![NH$_3$, Cl$^-$](image2)

2. Attack of amide ion on the benzyne intermediate:
iii) Abstraction of the proton from ammonia:

Salient Features: The main features of the mechanism involved in aromatic nucleophilic substitution via benzyne are given below.

i) At least one hydrogen must be present at ortho position in the inactivated aryl halide.

ii) The incoming group may or may not occupy the position vacated by the leaving group i.e. cine substitution.

**Substitution Radical Nucleophilic Unimolecular (S$_{RN1}$)**

Radical-nucleophilic aromatic substitution or $S_{RN1}$ in organic chemistry is a type of substitution reaction in which a certain substituent on an aromatic compound is replaced by a nucleophile through an intermediary free radical species.

**Illustrative reaction:**

**Mechanism involved:** The proposed mechanism for the reaction given above involves two steps which must be discussed before we give salient features of the same.

i) Formation of radical anion: The aryl halide accepts an electron from a radical initiator to form a radical anion.

ii) Transformation of radical anion into aryl radical:
iii) Attack of the nucleophile on the aryl radical:

iv) Transfer of electron to new aryl halide:

Salient Features: The main features of the mechanism involved in $S_{RN1}$ (substitution radical nucleophilic unimolecular) type reactions are given below.

i) $S_{RN1}$ reactions follow first-order kinetics with the rate law

$$Rate = k[RX]$$

Where $k$ is the rate constant and $[RX]$ represents the molar concentration of the substrate.

ii) The phenyl radical can also abstract any loose proton to form arene in a chain termination reaction to yield the final product.
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Table of Contents

CHAPTER 1 ................................................................................................................................................. 11
Nature of Bonding in Organic Molecules ........................................................................................................ 11
  ❖ Delocalized Chemical Bonding ................................................................................................................. 11
  ❖ Conjugation ............................................................................................................................................... 14
  ❖ Cross Conjugation ...................................................................................................................................... 16
  ❖ Resonance .................................................................................................................................................. 18
  ❖ Hyperconjugation ...................................................................................................................................... 27
  ❖ Tautomerism .............................................................................................................................................. 31
  ❖ Aromaticity in Benzenoid and Nonbenzenoid Compounds ........................................................................ 33
  ❖ Alternant and Non-Alternant Hydrocarbons .............................................................................................. 35
  ❖ Huckel’s Rule: Energy Level of \( \pi \)-Molecular Orbitals .......................................................................... 37
  ❖ Annulenes ................................................................................................................................................ 44
  ❖ Antiaromaticity ......................................................................................................................................... 46
  ❖ Homoaromaticity ................................................................................................................................~~~~~ 48
  ❖ PMO Approach ........................................................................................................................................ 50
  ❖ Bonds Weaker Than Covalent .................................................................................................................. 58
  ❖ Addition Compounds: Crown Ether Complexes and Cryptands, Inclusion Compounds, Cycloextrins ........................................................................................................ 65
  ❖ Catenanes and Rotaxanes ........................................................................................................................ 75
  ❖ Problems .................................................................................................................................................. 79
  ❖ Bibliography .......................................................................................................................................... 80

CHAPTER 2 ..................................................................................................................................................... 81
Stereochemistry ................................................................................................................................................ 81
  ❖ Chirality ................................................................................................................................................... 81
  ❖ Elements of Symmetry ............................................................................................................................. 86
  ❖ Molecules with More Than One Chiral Centre: Diastereomerism ............................................................ 90
  ❖ Determination of Relative and Absolute Configuration (Octant Rule Excluded) with Special Reference to Lactic Acid, Alanine & Mandelic Acid ........................................................................... 92
  ❖ Methods of Resolution ........................................................................................................................... 102
  ❖ Optical Purity .......................................................................................................................................... 104
  ❖ Prochirality ............................................................................................................................................... 105
  ❖ Enantiotopic and Diastereotopic Atoms, Groups and Faces .................................................................... 107
  ❖ Asymmetric Synthesis: Cram’s Rule and Its Modifications, Prelog’s Rule .............................................. 113
  ❖ Conformational Analysis of Cycloalkanes (Upto Six Membered Rings) ................................................. 116
  ❖ Decalins ................................................................................................................................................... 122
  ❖ Conformations of Sugars ........................................................................................................................ 126
  ❖ Optical Activity in Absence of Chiral Carbon ( Biphenyls, Allenes and Spiranes ) .................................. 132
  ❖ Chirality Due to Helical Shape ................................................................................................................. 137
  ❖ Geometrical Isomerism in Alkenes and Oximes ....................................................................................... 140
  ❖ Methods of Determining the Configuration ............................................................................................ 146
CHAPTER 3

Reaction Mechanism: Structure and Reactivity

- Types of Mechanisms
- Types of Reactions
- Thermodynamic and Kinetic Requirements
- Kinetic and Thermodynamic Control
- Hammond’s Postulate
- Curtin-Hammett Principle
- Potential Energy Diagrams: Transition States and Intermediates
- Methods of Determining Mechanisms
- Isotope Effects
- Hard and Soft Acids and Bases
- Generation, Structure, Stability and Reactivity of Carbocations, Carbanions, Free Radicals, Carbenes and Nitrenes
- Effect of Structure on Reactivity
- The Hammett Equation and Linear Free Energy Relationship
- Substituent and Reaction Constants
- Taft Equation
- Problems

CHAPTER 4

Carbohydrates

- Types of Naturally Occurring Sugars
- Deoxy Sugars
- Amino Sugars
- Branch Chain Sugars
- General Methods of Determination of Structure and Ring Size of Sugars with Particular Reference to Maltose, Lactose, Sucrose, Starch and Cellulose
- Problems

CHAPTER 5

Natural and Synthetic Dyes

- Various Classes of Synthetic Dyes Including Heterocyclic Dyes
- Interaction Between Dyes and Fibers
- Structure Elucidation of Indigo and Alizarin
- Problems

CHAPTER 6

Aliphatic Nucleophilic Substitution

- The SN₂, SN₁, Mixed SN₁ and SN₂, SN₀, SN₁′, SN₂′, SN₀′ and SET Mechanisms
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Aliphatic Electrophilic Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Aromatic Electrophilic Substitution</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Aromatic Nucleophilic Substitution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- The Neighbouring Group Mechanisms ................................................................. 263
- Neighbouring Group Participation by $\pi$ and $\sigma$ Bonds ................................ 265
- Anchimeric Assistance .......................................................................................... 269
- Classical and Nonclassical Carbocations ............................................................... 272
- Phenonium Ions ....................................................................................................... 283
- Common Carbocation Rearrangements ..................................................................... 284
- Applications of NMR Spectroscopy in the Detection of Carbocations .................. 286
- Reactivity – Effect of Substrate Structure, Attacking Nucleophile, Leaving Group and Reaction Medium ................................................................. 288
- Ambident Nucleophiles and Regioselectivity ......................................................... 294
- Phase Transfer Catalysis ......................................................................................... 297
- Problems ................................................................................................................. 300
- Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 301

- Bimolecular Mechanisms – SE$_2$ and SE$_i$ ........................................................... 302
- The SE$_3$ Mechanism .............................................................................................. 305
- Electrophilic Substitution Accompanied by Double Bond Shifts ................................ 307
- Effect of Substrates, Leaving Group and the Solvent Polarity on the Reactivity ........ 308
- Problems ................................................................................................................. 310
- Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 311

- The Arenium Ion Mechanism ................................................................................. 312
- Orientation and Reactivity ....................................................................................... 314
- Energy Profile Diagrams ......................................................................................... 316
- The Ortho/Para Ratio .............................................................................................. 317
- ipso-Attack ............................................................................................................... 319
- Orientation in Other Ring Systems .......................................................................... 320
- Quantitative Treatment of Reactivity in Substrates and Electrophiles .................... 321
- Diazonium Coupling ................................................................................................... 325
- Vilsmeier Reaction .................................................................................................... 326
- Gattermann-Koch Reaction ...................................................................................... 327
- Problems ................................................................................................................. 329
- Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 330

- The ArSN$_1$, ArSN$_2$, Benzyne and SR$_N$$_1$ Mechanisms .................................... 331
- Reactivity – Effect of Substrate Structure, Leaving Group and Attacking Nucleophile 336
- The von Richter, Sommelet-Hauser, and Smiles Rearrangements .......................... 339
- Problems ................................................................................................................. 343
- Bibliography ............................................................................................................ 344
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