

Manjunath² have examined the fixed oil of the seeds and found oleic, linoleic, palmitic and lignoceric acids along with sitosterol in the unsaponifiable matter. Ito and Ota³ report a fungistatic activity to the seeds. Narayana and Rangaswamy⁴ have also studied the seeds by extracting them with non-aqueous solvents. No work seems to have been done on the chemistry of the aqueous extractives. However, Bhatnagar *et al.*,⁵ during their general survey and preliminary screening of plants of physiological activity, have reported that a 10% methanolic extract of the seeds has some oxytocic effect. We have now examined the seeds with a view to isolate the water-soluble active principle.

A 10% methanolic extract of the seeds has been obtained as a very viscous mass from which a brownish-white precipitate comes out on addition of excess of alcohol. The purification of the active principle has been effected by repeated dissolution in water and reprecipitation with alcohol.

The compound, obtained in a yield of 2% is brown in colour, insoluble in organic solvents, and soluble in water. It gives positive tests for nitrogen, sulphur and phosphorus. An aqueous solution of the compound gives brownish white precipitate with neutral lead acetate and basic lead acetate. The compound gives a positive Molisch test indicating the presence of carbohydrates. On hydrolysis with 10% sulphuric acid for 3 hours, it has given 48.2% of reducing sugars calculated as glucose. The sugars are identified by descending paper chromatography⁶ to be galactose, mannose and xylose (Table I).

TABLE I

Spot No.	Rf value.	Corresponding sugar	Rf value of the sugar
1	0.13	Galactose	0.13
2	0.17	Mannose	0.17
3	0.21	Xylose	0.21

The compound has shown a good oxytocic activity and even in doses of 2 μ g./c. it is found to be very effective in producing contractions of the isolated uterus of guinea-pig.

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OXYTOCIC PRINCIPLE FROM THE SEEDS OF CASSIA TORA LINN.

Cassia tora Linn. (Leguminosæ), an annual herb, 30-90 cm. high, is distributed throughout India, Ceylon and the tropics generally. It grows quite abundantly in North India, particularly in Jammu region. The plant has been described in the Ayurvedic literature¹ as a remedy for many skin diseases. Subba Jois and

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