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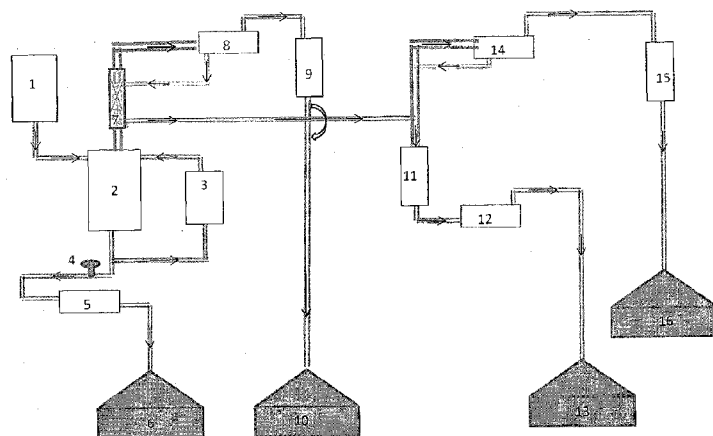
(54) Title: PROCESS FOR PREPARATION OF HYDROBROMIC ACID

Fig.1

(57) Abstract: A process has been disclosed for preparation of hydrobromic acid from bromine, sulfur dioxide and water, which involves in situ generation of bromine from bittern for the production of hydrobromic acid and separation thereof from co-products, viz., sulfuric and hydrochloric acids. The invented process obviates the need for double distillation or precipitation step for removal of sulfate impurities. The concentration of the product obtained by the invented process is about 48% and it contains < 15 ppm sulfate and chloride impurities.



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PROCESS FOR PREPARATION OF HYDROBROMIC ACID

FIELD OF INVENTION

This invention relates to a process for preparation of hydrobromic acid. More particularly, the invention relates to a process for preparation of hydrobromic acid from bromine and sulfur dioxide which involves in situ generation of bromine from bittern for the production of hydrobromic acid, and separation thereof from co-products, viz., sulfuric and hydrochloric acids.

BACKGROUND AND PRIOR ART

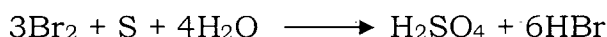
HBr forms azeotrope with water. The strength of constant boiling aqueous HBr solution can be maximum up to about 48%. Constant boiling HBr is very useful as a reagent as well as a reactant for synthesis of various chemical intermediates and chemicals, including pharmaceuticals.

High levels of impurities such as sulfate impurities are not acceptable for commercially important applications of HBr and hence purity of the product obtained is an important criteria which the manufacturing process must fulfill.

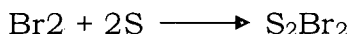
Conventionally, to obtain aqueous hydrobromic acid of desired strength and purity, double distillation and/or precipitation is carried out for removal of sulfate impurities. Double distillation and/or

precipitation adds to and extra step and cost of the process. It also consumes extra energy and increases environmental load.

Hydrobromic acid can be prepared by reaction of bromine with sulfur and water in accordance with the following reaction:



However, this reaction is slow and the reaction mixture requires to be vigorously stirred. The reaction mass remains cold initially and then there is a sudden rise in temperature causing bromine to evaporate. To overcome this problem, Frieda et al. have developed a process (US2342465) which comprises of two steps: in the first step, sulfur is dissolved in bromine so as to obtain sulfur bromide as follows:



S_2Br_2 thus formed is then reacted further with bromine and water to produce HBr and H_2SO_4 as follows:



Hydrobromic acid is recovered by distillation to obtain 42% HBr. Or alternatively sulfuric acid is removed by precipitation with barium carbonate.

CN1126174 discloses a process for preparing hydrobromic acid, said process includes reaction of bromine, sulfur and water at 20-50 deg.C for 1.5-20 hrs, filtering, distillation at 80-110 deg.C and addition of barium hydroxide to remove sulfuric radicals. A method for continuous preparation of hydrobromic acid from bromine and sulfur is reported by Mandalia et al., *Indian J. Technol.*, 1973, 11(9), 406.

USSR 472895 also discloses a method of preparation of HBr from Br₂, sulfur and water using MnO₂ and V₂O₅ as catalysts.

In above mentioned methods for preparing HBr from bromine and sulfur, sulfate impurities are present which needs to be removed either by double distillation or by precipitation which adds to energy consumption and cost as mentioned above.

Preparation of hydrobromic acid from bromine, carbon and water is also reported in the literature (US1870308). In this process, carbon is oxidized to carbon dioxide and bromine is converted into hydrogen bromide which dissolves in excess water. This process requires reactants in high purity because if carbon contains HBr soluble matter, the impurities need to be removed by treatment of carbon before the reaction.

US1379731 discloses a method of manufacturing HBr by direct distillation from a reaction mixture comprising alkali bromide (such as sodium bromide) and mineral acid (sulfuric acid).

A process for conversion of sodium bromide to hydrobromic acid and sodium bisulfate has been reported in the patent application US2004/0067191.

A continuous process for making hydrobromic acid from bromine and hydrogen and dissolution thereof in water to obtain HBr is disclosed in US1398596. GB154472, US1905432, US1380084 and US2070263 also discloses a method for manufacturing hydrobromic

acid from bromine and hydrogen. These methods require isolation of bromine and reaction with hydrogen which is hazardous.

RO111839 discloses a method of manufacturing HBr from sodium bromide and concentrated sulfuric acid to produce hydrobromic acid which is then sparged into azeotropic hydrobromic acid, until the desired concentration is obtained. Removal of sulfate impurities is a problem in this method also.

Israeli 39120 discloses a method of producing HBr free of Br₂ comprising treating brine such as Dead Sea brine in a reactor containing a fluidized bed of particles maintained in fluidized state by upward passage of gases at 800-1300°C.

Separation of aqueous HBr from an aqueous solutions containing mixture of HBr, HCl and H₂SO₄ has been reported in USSR709522. The method comprises fractional distillation followed by condensation of the acid vapor. The method was improved by distilling and condensing at 0.35-0.5 atm., by concentrating the solution during separation of HCl to an HBr content in the vapor of 44-9%, and by distilling during HBr separation to an H₂SO₄ concentration in the pot residue of 58-70%.

The abovementioned methods for producing hydrobromic acid reported in the prior art involve energy consuming process. Moreover, sulfate impurities are present in the product which compels one either for double distillation or treatment with

precipitating agent such as barium carbonate to get rid of sulfates. Present invention overcomes abovementioned drawbacks of prior art.

Closest prior art JP78149895 (application number JP19770066175) discloses a method for production of hydrogen bromide gas and sulfuric acid from bromine and sulfur dioxide. However, it requires higher temperature and prior-isolation of bromine for carrying out the process. The present invention consumes lesser energy and it also obviates the need for isolation of bromine. In the present invention, bromine is generated in situ from bittern and it is reacted with SO_2 without the need for isolation of bromine. Present invention also obviates the need for removal of sulfur by precipitation. The invented process is simple, cost effective and safer compared to the prior art.

OBJECTS OF INVENTION

An object of invention is to provide a simple, cost effective and continuous process for producing hydrobromic acid with desired concentration as well as purity.

Another object of invention is to provide a continuous process for producing hydrobromic acid by reaction of bromine with sulfur dioxide, without the need for isolation of bromine i.e., bromine is generated in situ from bittern and used for the reaction.

Another object of invention is to provide a continuous process for producing hydrobromic acid which does not require the step of

treatment with precipitating agent such as barium carbonate for removal of sulfate impurities.

Yet another object of invention is to provide a continuous process for producing hydrobromic acid which does not require double distillation of the product.

DESCRIPTION OF ACCOMPANYING DRAWINGS

Fig.1 is a schematic diagram showing equipments employed for preparation of hydrobromic acid wherein the numbered components are as under:

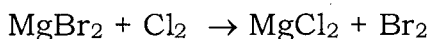
- 1 ⇒ feed tank
- 2 ⇒ flash tank
- 3 ⇒ re-boiler
- 4 ⇒ valve
- 5 ⇒ heat exchanger
- 6 ⇒ storage tank
- 7 ⇒ reflux divider
- 8 ⇒ main heat exchanger
- 9 ⇒ vertical heat exchanger
- 10 ⇒ storage tank
- 11 ⇒ re-boiler
- 12 ⇒ heat exchanger
- 13 ⇒ storage tank
- 14 ⇒ heat exchanger
- 15 ⇒ vertical heat exchanger

16 $\Rightarrow$ storage tank

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF INVENTION

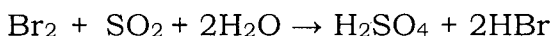
Bittern contains 800-1000 ppm bromine as magnesium bromide (MgBr_2). Upon treatment of acidified bittern ($\text{pH} = 3$) with chlorine, oxidation followed by substitution reaction occurs, releasing bromine.

Overall reaction is as under:



Some HCl is also generated during chlorination of bittern.

Bromine thus generated is subjected to air-stripping and then it passes through absorption tower, where it reacts with SO_2 and water to form hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid.



Strength of HBr obtained at this stage is 25-28% and that of H_2SO_4 is 15-20%.

Flash tank(2) and re-boiler(3) are filled with mixture of $\text{HBr} + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ obtained as stated above. It also contains some HCl . The flash tank(2) is made up of polymer material and it is connected via connecting pipes to the re-boiler(3) as shown in Fig.1. The re-boiler(3) is made up of corrosion resistant material such as graphite. The acid mixture is heated to 95-100°C by heating re-boiler(3). The system is maintained at a reduced pressure of 670-700 mm and hence the mixture boils at 95-100°C. The mixture boils and starts thermo-siphoning from re-boiler(3) to flash-tank(2) through upper connecting pipe.

Because of the difference in boiling points and specific gravity, H_2SO_4 tends to remain at the bottom of the flash tank(2). HBr , HCl and water vapourizes and tends to move towards the upper end of the flash tank(2). The upper end of the flash tank(2) is connected via a hollow glass column to the heat exchanger(8).

Once the mixture starts thermosiphoning, $\text{HBr} + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ mixture is added continuously into the flash tank(2) from the feed tank(1). HBr forms azeotropic mixture with water and it goes into heat exchanger(8). HBr condenses in the heat exchanger(8) and it is fed back to the upper part of the hollow glass column as shown in Fig.1. HCl is low boiling and along with some water vapour it moves from heat exchanger(8) to vertical heat exchanger(9) where it condenses and is collected separately in tank(10).

A reflux divider(7) is provided at the centre of the hollow glass column mentioned above. HBr which is fed back to the upper part of the hollow glass column falls on the lower part of the reflux divider. At this stage, the concentration of HBr is 41-45% and it still contains 500-800 ppm HCl . Hence it needs to be purified and concentrated further.

Lower part of the reflux divider is at a comparatively higher temperature than the upper part. Due to this, when 41-45% HBr (containing 500-800 ppm HCl) falls on the lower part of the reflux divider, HCl and water remaining therein further evaporates from it and enters into the heat exchanger(8). Thus HBr gets further purified and concentrated.

A connecting pipe is provided at the lower end of the reflux divider(7) which extends up to a glass column above the re-boiler(11). HBr flows from the bottom of the reflux divider(7) to re-boiler(11) via this connecting pipe.

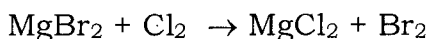
As the temperature of re-boiler(11) is maintained at 65-70°C, traces of HCl and water vapour present in HBr evaporates and goes into the heat exchanger(14) along with some HBr-mist. HBr-mist condenses in the heat exchanger(14) and flows back to re-boiler(11). HCl and water vapour goes from upper end of heat exchanger(14) to vertical heat exchanger(15) where it condenses and it is collected in the storage tank 16.

Because of high specific gravity, HBr collects at the bottom of the re-boiler(11), from where it flows through the heat exchanger(12) and ultimately flows to the storage tank(13). The concentration of HBr collected in the storage tank(13) is about 48%. It contains <15 ppm sulfate and <15 ppm chloride.

H₂SO₄ is collected from the bottom of the flash-tank(2) by opening the valve(4). Collection is started when specific gravity of H₂SO₄ is at least 1.45, preferably at least 1.5. Rate of drain-out of H₂SO₄ is adjusted in proportion with the rate of addition of the HBr + H₂SO₄ mixture in the flash-tank(2).

EXAMPLE-1

As per an embodiment of the invention, bittern containing about 1000 ppm bromine as magnesium bromide (MgBr_2) was acidified with sulfuric acid to pH 3. Acidified bittern was sprayed from the top of a stripping tower. Chlorine gas (3-4% in excess to stoichiometric amount of bromine content of the bittern) and air were injected from the bottom of the stripping tower. It generated bromine as per the following reaction:



Bromine thus generated was fed from the bottom of an absorption tower in which SO_2 (about 5% in excess to stoichiometric amount) and water were introduced from the top. Bromine reacted with SO_2 and water to obtain HBr (28%) and H_2SO_4 (20%).

$\text{HBr} + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ mixture obtained as above was filled in flash tank(2) and re-boiler(3). It was heated to 95°C by heating re-boiler. The system was maintained at about 670 mm. After the mixture started boiling and thermo-siphoning, gradual addition of $\text{HBr} + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ mixture into the flash tank was started.

H_2SO_4 formed was collected from the bottom of the flash tank(2) by opening the valve(4). Collection was started when specific gravity of H_2SO_4 was 1.51. Rate of drain-out of H_2SO_4 was adjusted in proportion with the rate of addition of the $\text{HBr} + \text{H}_2\text{SO}_4$ mixture in the flash-tank(2).

HBr formed azeotropic mixture with water and was condensed in heat exchanger(8). It was fed back to the upper part of the hollow glass column in which a reflux divider(7) was fitted. HBr was then allowed to flow from the bottom of the reflux divider(7) to re-boiler(11)

via a connecting pipe. Temperature of the re-boiler(11) was maintained at 65-70°C. HBr collecting at the bottom of the re-boiler(11) was allowed to flow via heat exchanger(12) to the storage tank(13). Concentration of HBr collected in the storage tank(13) was about 48% and it contained <15 ppm chloride and sulfate impurities. Incidentally produced HCl and water were removed from the mixture containing hydrobromic acid, HCl and water by allowing HCl and water vapour to flow from heat exchanger(8) to vertical heat exchanger(9), allowing them to condense in vertical heat exchanger(9) and collecting in tank(10).

traces of HCl and water which was carried to re-boiler(11) along with hydrobromic acid were further removed from hydrobromic acid by maintaining temperature of re-boiler(11) at 65-70°C, thereby allowing HCl and water to evaporate and flow to heat exchanger(14) and subsequently to vertical heat exchanger(15), allowing HCl and water vapour to condense in vertical heat exchanger(15), and collecting them in the storage tank(16).

HBr mist which was carried away to heat exchanger(14) was allowed to condense in the heat exchanger(14) and was fed back to re-boiler(11).

CLAIMS:

1. A continuous process for manufacturing hydrobromic acid by treatment of bittern with chlorine to generate bromine which is reacted in situ with SO_2 and water to produce a mixture of hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid, wherein hydrobromic acid is separated from sulfuric acid and concentrated by steps comprising:
 - (i) filling the mixture of hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid in flash tank(2) and re-boiler(3) shown in the Fig.1;
 - (ii) heating the mixture of hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid to 95-100°C under reduced pressure by heating re-boiler(3) so as to cause thermo-siphoning of said mixture from re-boiler(3) to flash tank(2);
 - (iii) starting gradual addition of mixture of hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid from feed tank(1) to flash tank(2), maintaining the temperature at 95-100°C;
 - (iv) condensing azeotropic mixture of hydrobromic acid and water formed during above step in the heat exchanger(8) and feeding it back to a hollow column which is fitted above the flash tank(2);
 - (v) allowing hydrobromic acid to drop into a reflux divider(7) which is fitted in the hollow column mentioned above;
 - (vi) allowing hydrobromic acid to flow through a connecting pipe from reflux divider(7) to re-boiler(11), said re-boiler(11) maintained at 65-70°C,;
 - (vii) allowing hydrobromic acid to flow from the bottom of the re-boiler(11) to storage tank(13) via heat exchanger(12);
 - (viii) start collecting sulfuric acid from the bottom of flash tank(2) into tank(6) via heat exchanger(5) by opening the valve(4) when specific gravity of sulfuric acid is at least 1.45.

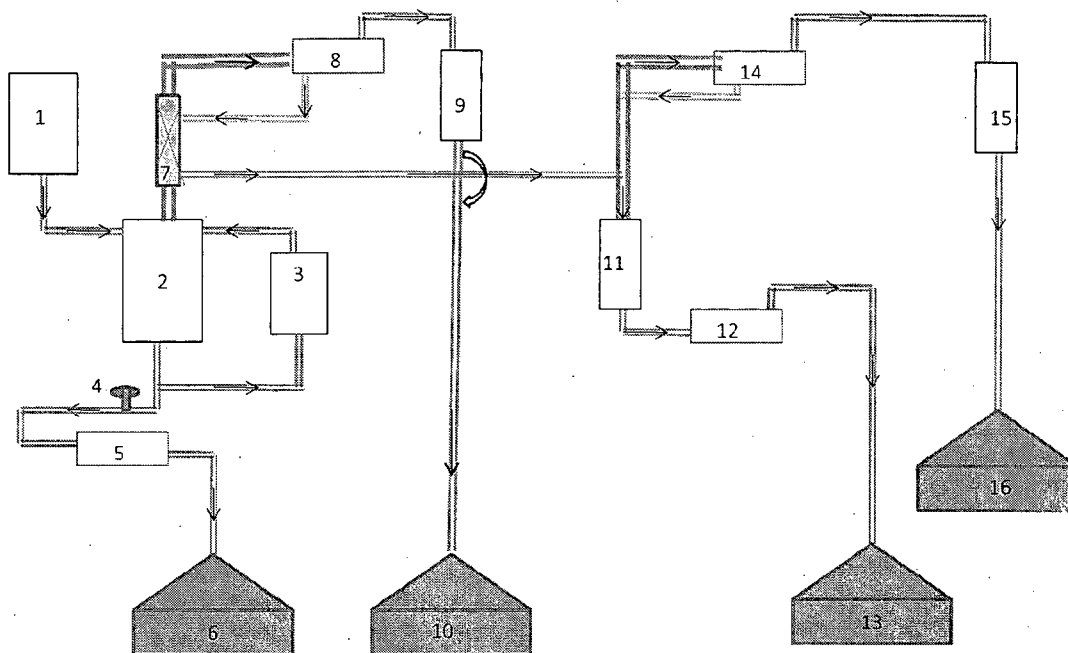


Fig.1

2. A continuous process for manufacturing hydrobromic acid as claimed in claim 1, wherein incidentally produced HCl and water are removed from the mixture containing hydrobromic acid, HCl and water by allowing HCl and water vapour to flow from heat exchanger(8) to vertical heat exchanger(9), allowing them to condense in vertical heat exchanger(9) and collecting in tank(10).

3. A continuous process for manufacturing hydrobromic acid as claimed in claim 1, wherein traces of HCl and water which get carried to re-boiler(11) along with hydrobromic acid are further removed from hydrobromic acid by maintaining temperature of re-boiler(11) at 65-70°C, thereby allowing HCl and water to evaporate and flow to heat exchanger(14) and subsequently to vertical heat exchanger(15),

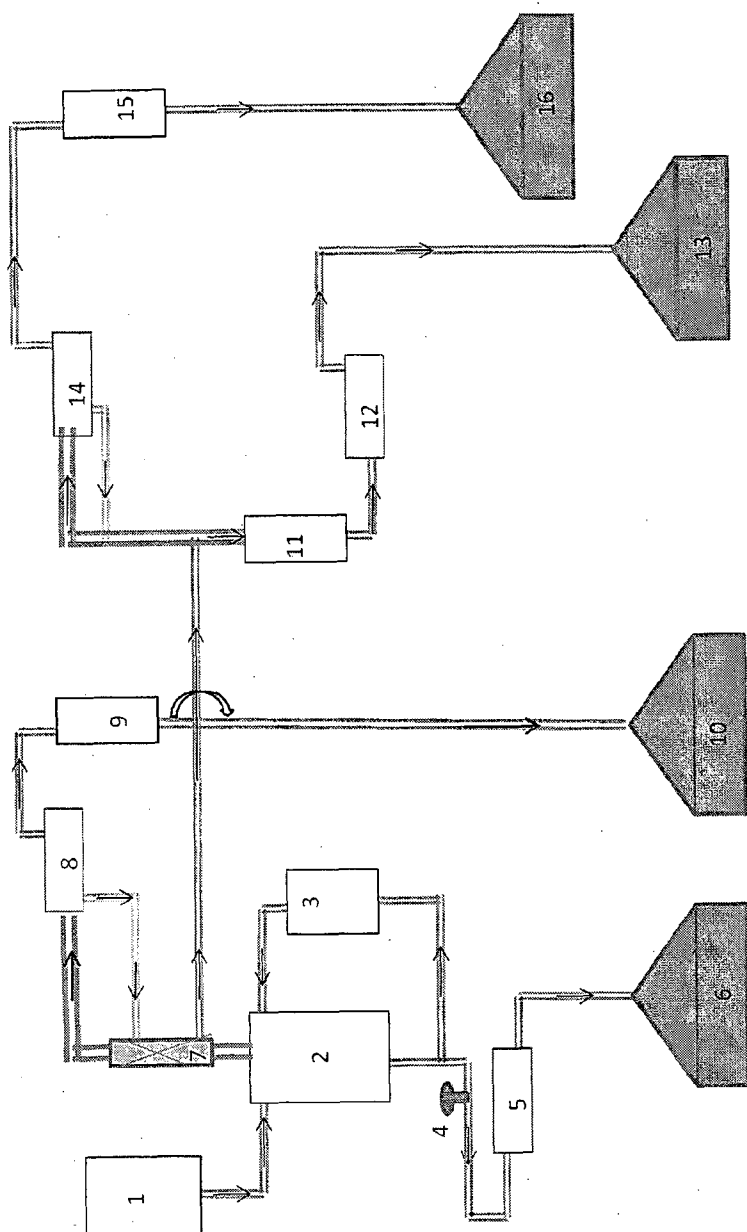
allowing HCl and water vapour to condense in vertical heat exchanger(15), and collecting them in a storage tank.

4. A continuous process for manufacturing hydrobromic acid as claimed in claim 1, wherein HBr mist which gets carried away to heat exchanger(14) is allowed to condense in the heat exchanger(14) and is fed back to re-boiler(11).

5. A process for separation of hydrobromic acid and sulfuric acid comprising steps as claimed in claim 1.

Dated this 19th Day of February, 2015.

AGROCEL INDUSTRIES LIMITED



Dated this 19th Day of February, 2015.

Fig.1