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RESEARCH ARTICLE

OPTIMIZATION OF SILICON SOLAR CELL BASE THICKNESS, WHILE ILLUMINATED BY A LONG WAVELENGTH MONOCHROMATIC LIGHT: INFLUENCE OF BOTH LORENTZ LAW AND UMLAPP PROCESS

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Abstract

The optimum thickness of a silicon solar cell base is determined using phenomenologic parameters, which are the minority carriers' diffusion coefficient and the recombination velocity at the back side, influenced by Lorentz's law and the Umklapp process. The results obtained are consistent with the generation of minority charge carriers deep in the base by a monochromatic light of long wavelength.

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Introduction:-

The optimization of the dimensions of the different regions of the solar cell, allows a saving of material in the final elaboration. Mechanical cutting [1, 2, 3] cannot lead to results that can be justified from physical mechanisms point of view.

Modeling work [4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12] taking into account physical mechanisms is an interesting way for the search for geometric dimensions leading to a better efficiency of the solar cell [13].

The study that is presented aims to determine the optimum thickness of the base of the solar cell, placed under the conditions of both temperature [14, 15] and magnetic field [16, 17], starting from the physical mechanisms [18, 19] of absorption-generation-diffusion and recombination in volume and surfaces, of the minority charge carriers photogenerated in the base.

Then the steady state magneto-transport equation [16] relating to the density of excess minority carriers generated by a monochromatic light with constant flux ($\alpha(\lambda)$) in the base of a (n+/p/p+) silicon solar cell [20, 21] under applied magnetic field (B) and imposed temperature (T), is solved.

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The surface recombination rates [22], such as, (Sf) at the junction (n⁺/p) [23, 24] and (Sb) on the back side (p/p⁺) [25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30] intervene for the boundary conditions, and make it possible to define a complete solution $\delta(x, Sf, Sb, D(B, T), (\alpha(\lambda)))$ of the density of the minority charge carriers in the base.

The photocurrent density $J_{ph}(H, Sf, Sb, D(B, T), (\alpha(\lambda)))$ is then deduced and represented as a function of (Sf) the recombination velocity of the minority charge carriers at the junction, which at its large values makes it possible to extract the expressions of the recombination velocity (Sb) on the back side [23]

The representation of both (Sb) expressions in curves as a function of (H) the thickness of the base of the solar cell, for different values of (Dmax), makes it possible to obtain (Hopt) the optimum thickness.

Consequently (Hopt) is represented as a function of the optimum diffusion coefficient (Dmax (B, Topt)) and then (Topt) and (B). The results are analyzed and interpreted to show the (Si) material saving conditions. Thus the base optimum thickness (Hopt) increases with Dmax coefficient, but decreases with both (Topt) and (B), giving rise to mathematical relationships modeling which are proposed.

Theory

The structure of the n⁺-p-p⁺ monofaciale silicon solar cell [20, 21] under constant monochromatic illumination, under magnetic field (B) at temperature (T), is given by figure 1.

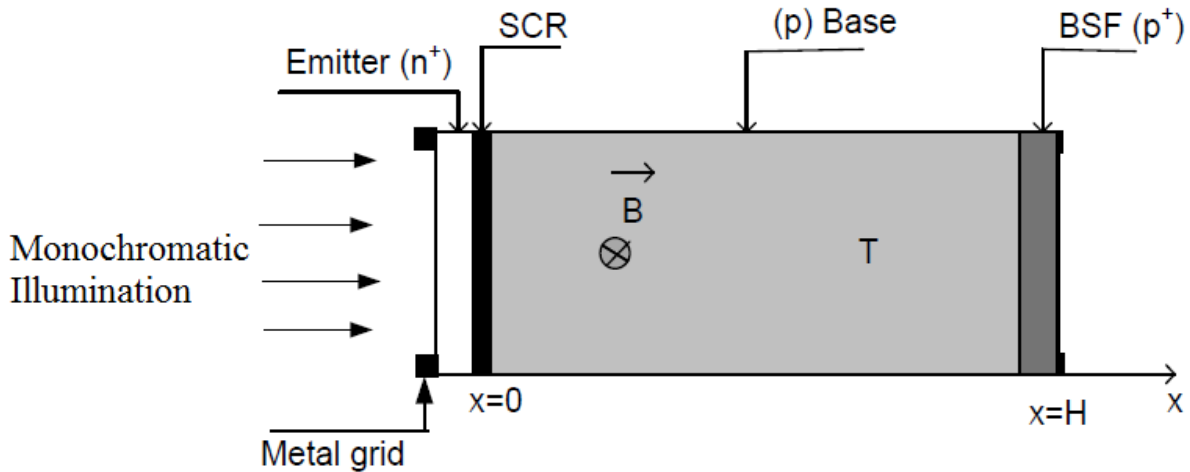


Figure 1:- Structure of (n⁺/p/p⁺) silicon solar cell.

Monochromatic illumination flux is strongly absorbed in the base, because of low absorption coefficient $\alpha(\lambda) = 6.2\text{cm}^{-1}$ for $\lambda = 1.08 \mu\text{m}$ that corresponds to long wavelength for silicon material [31, 32, 33, 34]. The excess minority carriers are photogenerated deeply in the base and therefore submitted strongly to the magnetic field effect [16, 18, 35].

Then excess minority carriers' density $\delta(x, B, T)$ generated with monochromatic illumination in the base of the solar cell, under magnetic field (B) at temperature (T), is then governed by the following magneto transport equation in steady state [16, 17].

$$D(B, T) \times \frac{\partial^2 \delta(x, B, T)}{\partial x^2} - \frac{\delta(x, B, T)}{\tau} = -G(x) \quad (1)$$

τ and $D(B, T)$ are respectively the lifetime and the diffusion coefficient of the excess minority carriers in the base under magnetic field and under temperature.

Under magnetic field, the diffusion coefficient is given by the following relation [16]:

$$D(B, T) = \frac{D(T)}{1 + (\mu B)^2} \quad (2)$$

With: $D(T) = \frac{\mu(T) \cdot K \cdot T}{q}$ (3)

And the mobility coefficient [36] is given as:

$\mu(T) = 1,43 \cdot 10^{19} \cdot T^{-2,42}$ (4)

- L represents the diffusion length of excess minority carriers in the base:

$L^2(B, T) = D(B, T) \cdot \tau$ (5)

- Carrier generation rate $G(x, t)$ is given by the relationship :

$G(x) = \alpha(\lambda) \cdot I_0(\lambda) \cdot (1 - R(\lambda)) \cdot e^{-\alpha(\lambda) \cdot x}$ (6)

- x is the depth in the base.

1) The solution of equation (1) is:

$\delta(x, B, T, \alpha) = A \cdot \cosh\left[\frac{x}{L(B, T)}\right] + E \cdot \sinh\left[\frac{x}{L(B, T)}\right] + K \cdot e^{-\alpha \cdot x}$ (7)

With $K = \frac{\alpha \cdot I_0 \cdot (1 - R) \cdot [L(B, T)]^2}{D(B, T) [L(B, T)^2 \cdot \alpha^2 - 1]}$ (8)

and $(L(B, T)^2 \cdot \alpha^2 \neq 1)$ (9)

Coefficients A and E are determined through the boundary conditions:

■ At the junction ($x = 0$)

$\frac{\partial \delta(x, \alpha, B, T)}{\partial x} \Big|_{x=0} = S_f \cdot \frac{\delta(x, \alpha, B, T)}{D(B, T)} \Big|_{x=0}$ (10)

■ On the back side in the base ($x = H$)

$\frac{\partial \delta(x, \alpha, B, T)}{\partial x} \Big|_{x=H} = -S_b \cdot \frac{\delta(x, \alpha, B, T)}{D(B, T)} \Big|_{x=H}$ (11)

S_f and S_b are respectively the recombination velocities of the excess minority carriers at the junction[37, 38, 39, 40, 41] and at the back surface[23, 24, 42].

Results and Discussions:-

Diffusion coefficient under both magnetic field and temperature

Plot of expression (2) with help of equations (3, 3 and 4), allows to extract (D_{max}) the maximum diffusion coefficient [43] which is related to optimum temperature (T_{opt}) for a given magnetic value, by following relation:

$D_{max}(B, T_{opt}) = \alpha' \cdot [T_{opt}(B)]^{\beta'}$ (12)

With $\alpha' = -1.51 \text{ cm}^2 / \text{s.K}$, and $\beta' = 11.87$

The optimal **Topt(B)** temperature separates two physical processes (normal process and Umklapp process) for a given magnetic field (**B**) where the diffusion of the minority charge carriers is maximum leading then, to **table. 1**.

Table 1:- Logarithm of the maxima of the diffusion coefficient and the optimal temperature.

Magnetic field B(T)	0.0003	0.0004	0,0005	0,0006	0.0007	0.0008	0.0009	0.001
LnT _{opt} (B)	5.54	5.65	5.73	5.81	5.87	5.94	5.99	6.01
lnD _{max} (B)	3.507	3.337	3.206	3.1	3.009	2.931	2.866	1.893

Photocurrent

The photocurrent density at the junction is obtained from the density of minority carriers in the base and is given by the following expression:

$$J_{ph}(Sf, Sb, \alpha, H, B, T) = qD(B, T) \left. \frac{\partial \delta(x, \alpha, H, Sf, Sb, B, T)}{\partial x} \right|_{x=0} \quad (13)$$

Where q is the elementary electron charge.

Figure 2:- shows the profile of photocurrent density versus the junction surface recombination velocity for different (Dmax) diffusion coefficient values impose by (Topt), for a given (B) value.

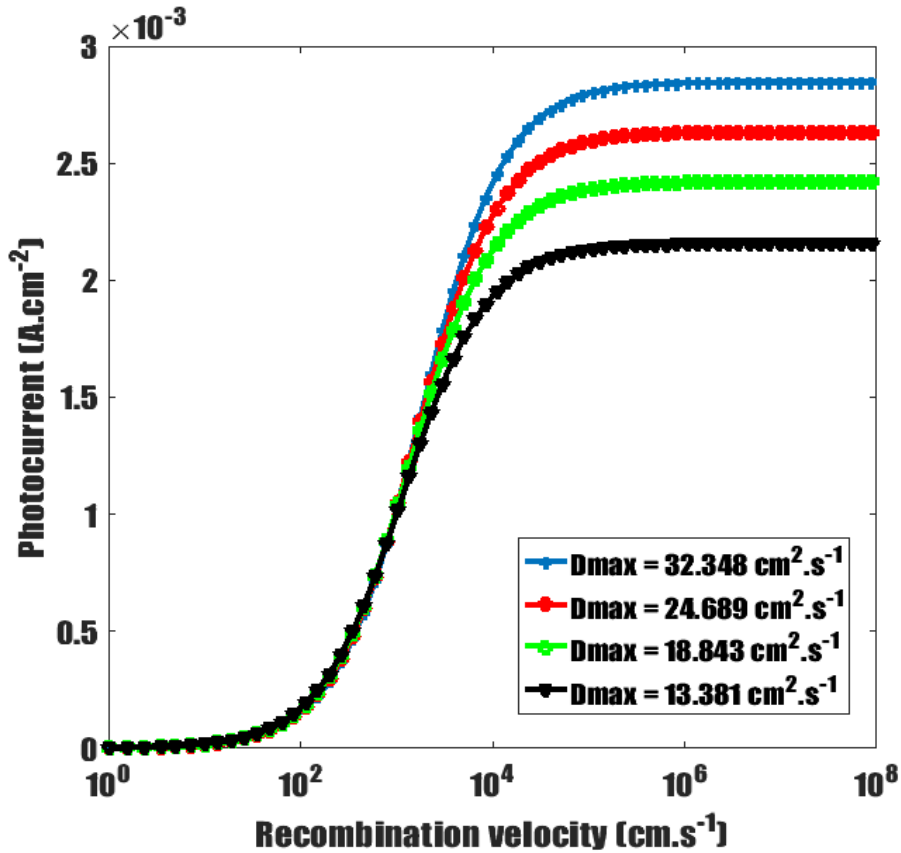


Figure 2:- Photocurrent density versus recombination velocity for different Dmax diffusion coefficient values ($\alpha = 6.2 \text{ cm}^{-1}$).

Base thickness Optimization through back surface recombination velocity representation

The representation of photocurrent density according to the junction recombination velocity of minority carriers, shows that, for very large (Sf), short-circuit current density (Jphsc) is obtained by a bearing. Then, in this junction recombination velocity interval, it comes:

$$\left. \frac{\partial J_{ph}(Sf, Sb, H, \alpha, B, T)}{\partial Sf} \right|_{Sf \geq 10^5 \text{ cm.s}^{-1}} = 0 \quad (14)$$

The solution of equation (14) leads to both expressions of excess minority carrier’s recombination velocity in the back surface [23, 24, 27, 39, 40], is given through equations (15) and (16):

$$Sb1(B, T, H) = -\frac{D(B, T)}{L(B, T)} \cdot \tanh\left(\frac{H}{L(B, T)}\right) \quad (15)$$

Sb1 is related to the diffusion process of excess minority carriers [23, 24, 25, 39, 40]

$$Sb2(B,T,H,\alpha(\lambda)) = \frac{D(B,T)}{L(B,T)} \cdot \left[\frac{\alpha(\lambda) \cdot L(B,T) \cdot \left(\exp(-\alpha(\lambda) \cdot H) - \cosh\left(\frac{H}{L(B,T)}\right) + \sinh\left(\frac{H}{L(B,T)}\right) \right)}{\exp(-\alpha(\lambda) \cdot H) - \cosh\left(\frac{H}{L(B,T)}\right) + \alpha(\lambda) \cdot L(B,T) \cdot \sinh\left(\frac{H}{L(B,T)}\right)} \right] \tag{16}$$

(16)

Sb2 is associated to both velocity processes [23, 32], the generation (αD) and the diffusion ($\frac{D}{L}$).

The **figure. 3** gives the representation of both back surface recombination velocity's expressions versus thickness of the base of the solar cell for different (D_{max}) diffusion coefficient. The technique of the intercept point of the two curves (**Sb1** and **Sb2**) leads to the base optimum thickness [44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50].

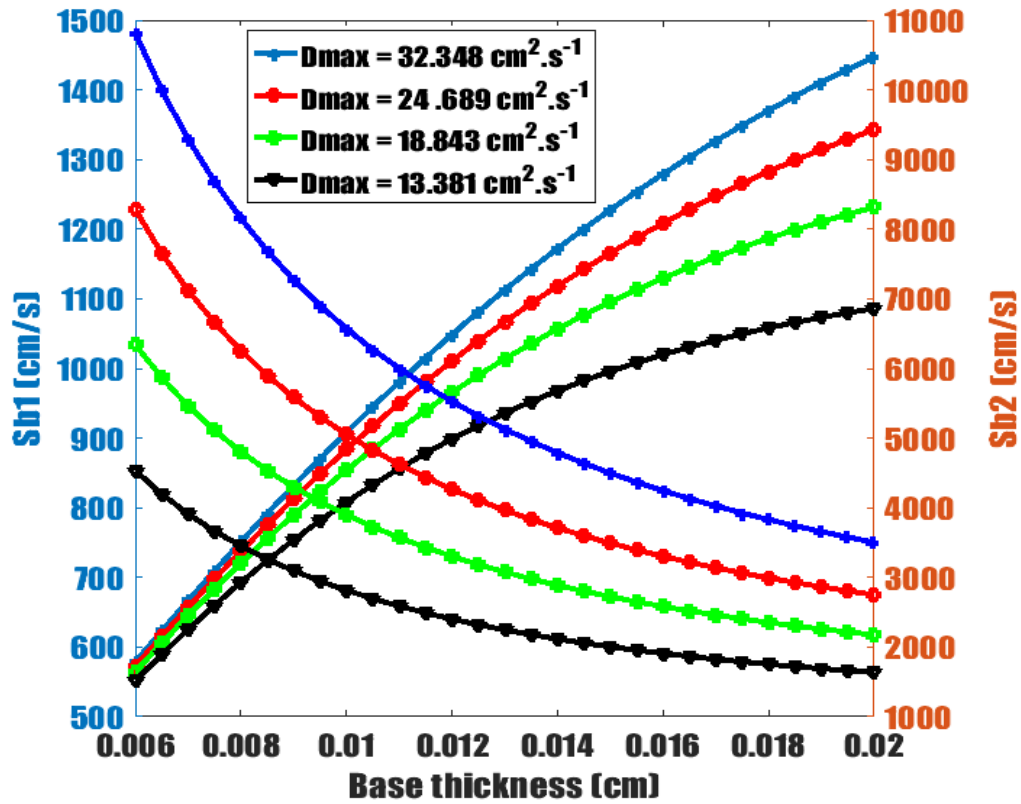


Figure 3:- Sb1 and Sb2 versus depth in the base for given diffusion coefficient ($\alpha = 6.2 \text{ cm}^{-1}$).

Table 2, gives the results obtained of the base optimum thickness of the ($n^+/p/p^+$) silicon solar cell, front illuminated with long wave length light (weak absorption), and under magnetic field and temperature.

Table2:-Base Optimum thickness.

B (Tesla)	$10^{-3.5}$	$10^{-3.3}$	$10^{-3.1}$	$10^{-2.9}$
Top(K)	261	315	381	461
Dmax (cm ² /s)	32.348	24.689	18.843	13.381
Hopt (cm)	0.0111	0.0102	0.0094	0.0085

Figure. 4, shows the base optimum thickness versus (**Dmax**) the maximum diffusion coefficient of minority carrier. The diffusion coefficient (**Dmax**) is obtained at the boundary (**Top**) of two physical phenomena, deflection (Lorentz's law) and the Umklapp process, due respectively to the magnetic field and temperature variation. This boundary led to the choice of optimization variables. Then the optimum thickness increases with the minority carrier diffusion coefficient [5, 6, 7, 11, 30, 44, 46, 47].

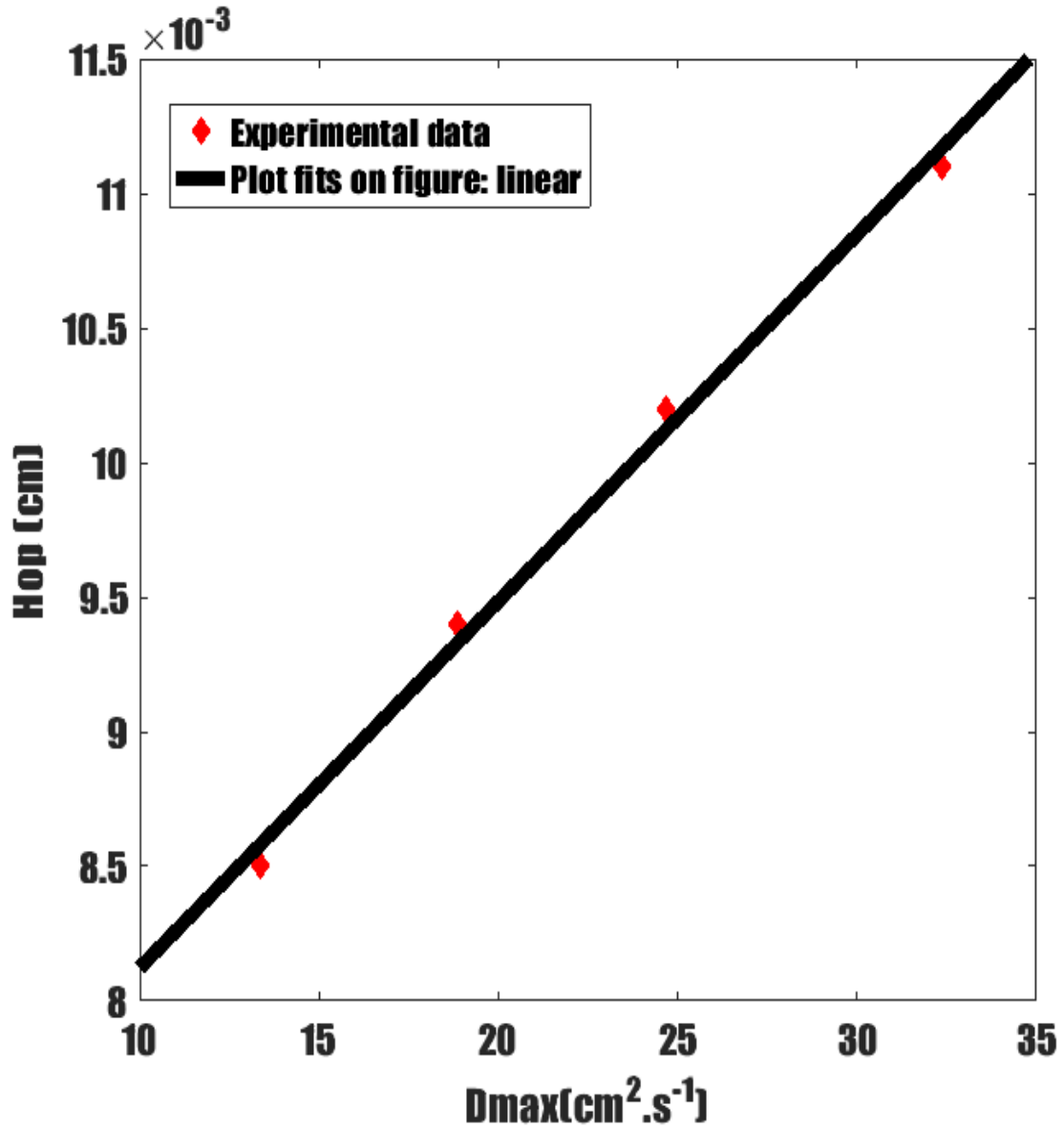


Figure 4:- Optimum thickness versus Dmax.

The optimum thickness of the base (Figure 4) increases linearly (Eq. 17) with the diffusion coefficient of the minority carriers, which is limited only by the doping rate of the material[5]. The relationship is given as:

$$Hopt(cm) = -1.4 \cdot 10^{-4} \times Dmax + 0.0068 \quad (17)$$

The optimum thickness of the base (Figures 5 and 6) decreases linearly respectively with the optimal temperature $T_{opt}(B)$ and the magnetic field(B). This decrease in the optimum thickness indicates the possible choice of reducing the amount of material to be used for the development of the solar cell, when it is to operate under the conditions indicated.

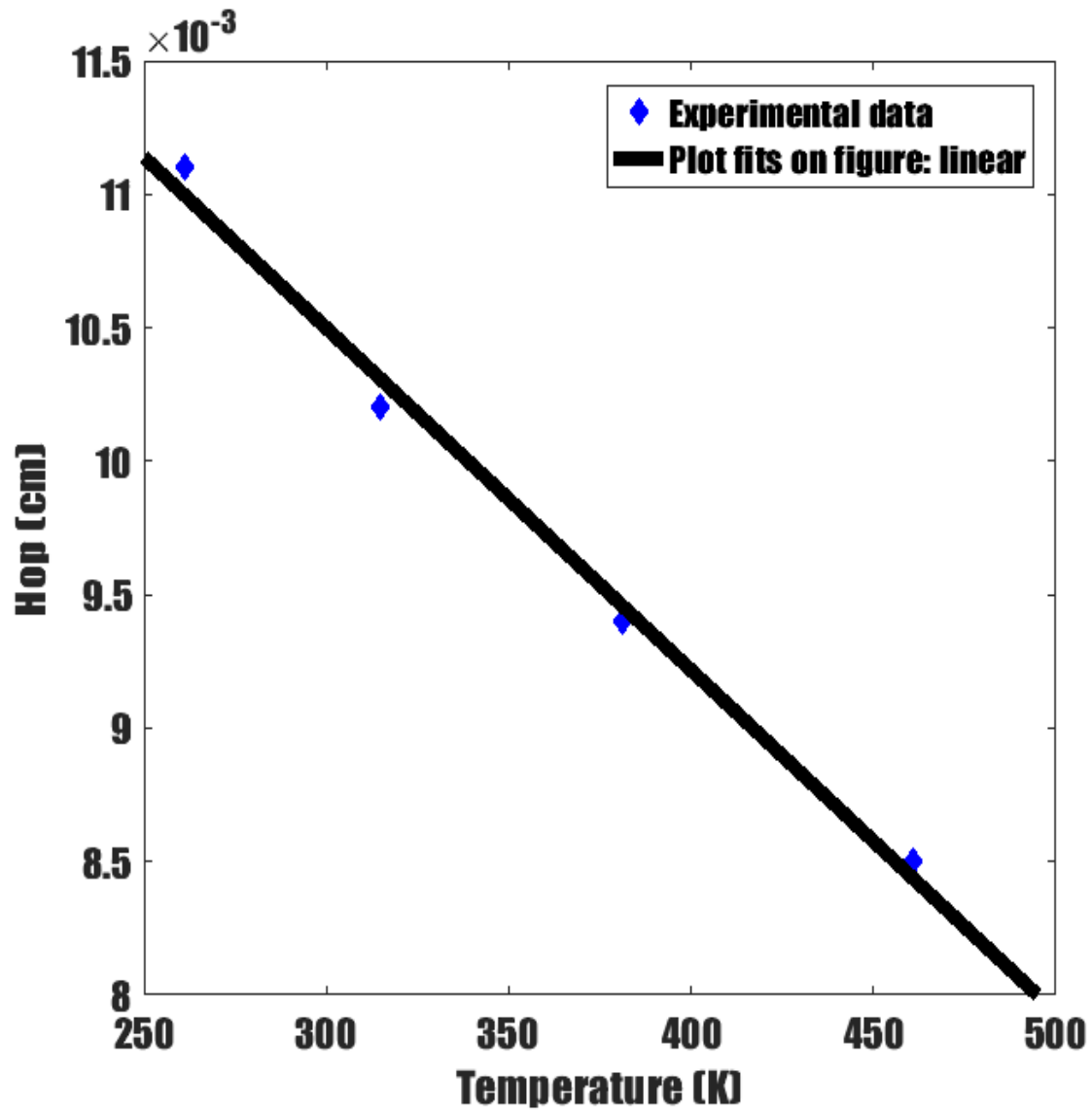


Figure 5:- Optimum thickness versus temperature.

The modelling expression of the optimum base thickness versus temperature is given as:

$$Hop(cm) = -1.3 \cdot 10^{-5} \times T(K) + 0.014 \quad (18)$$

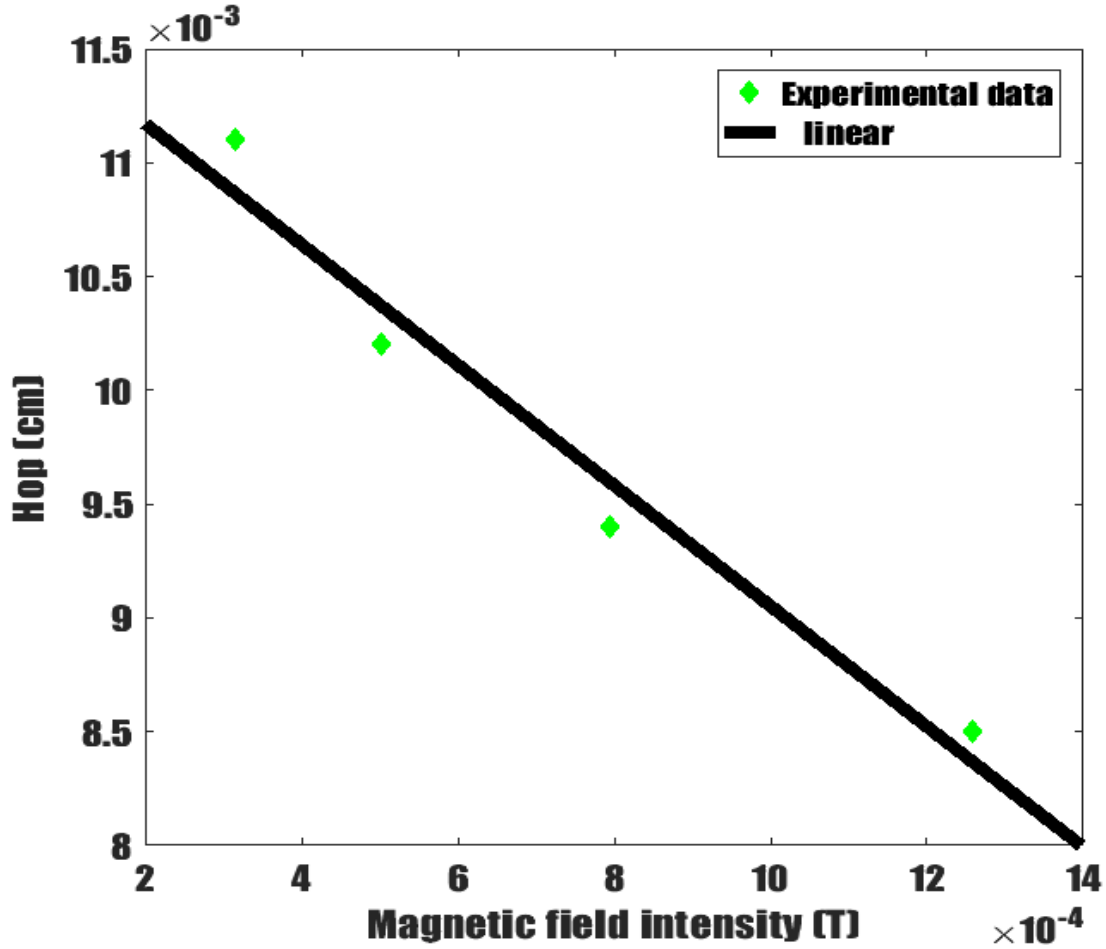


Figure 6:- Optimum thickness versus magnetic field.

The modelling expression of the optimum base thickness versus magnetic field is given as:

$$Hop(cm) = -1.3 \cdot 10^{-5} \times B(Tesla) + 0.014 \quad (19)$$

The **figure. 2** shows that the magnetic field applied parallel to the surface of the junction (n^+/p) causes a decrease in the photocurrent produced by the solar cell, because the Lorentz force deflects the electric charges, which consequently lengthens the path traveled to reach the junction [16, 18, 35]. Thus to increase the collection of photogenerated minority charge carriers and thus obtain an optimal photocurrent from the solar cell under the action of a magnetic field, the reduction of the thickness (**Eq. 19**) then is necessary [6, 7, 11, 12]. Improving the efficiency of solar cells necessarily involves controlling recombination parameters and controlling dimensions during their development.

Conclusion:-

This work made it possible to extract the optimum thickness of the base of the silicon solar cell under monochromatic illumination of weak absorption and to establish the mathematical co-relationships with the maximum diffusion coefficient of excess minority carriers obtained at the optimum temperature point, the boundary between the physical phenomena of deflection due to the magnetic field and Umklapp due to temperature.

For this, the magneto-transport equation relating to the density of the minority carriers in the base of the solar cell was solved, provided with the boundary conditions, which made it possible to introduce the recombination velocity in front and rear face.

The study of the expressions of the recombination velocity of the minority carriers on the back side, deduced from the density of the photocurrent, made it possible to extract the optimum thickness of the base of the solar cell.

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