

DIFFUSION OF IMPURITIES

IN SEMICONDUCTORS

BY

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

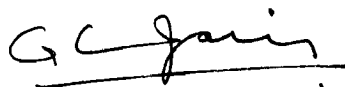
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN PHYSICS

TO

THE INDIAN INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY,

DELHI

This work has been done by Mr. Y.R. Anantha Prasad as a thesis project under my supervision in the Materials Division of the National Physical Laboratory. He has not received any assistance other than the usual laboratory facilities in executing this project.



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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This work owes its very existence to Prof. D.S. Kothari, Chairman, University Grants Commission, with whose kind and valuable advice the project was initiated. Special thanks are also due to Dr. G.C. Jain whose able guidance has been a source of constant encouragement in my research. I would also like to record my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. A.R. Verma, Director, National Physical Laboratory for having given me full facilities for my research. I am also indebted to Dr. S.C. Jain, Director, Solid State Physics Laboratory for having allowed me the use of his precision furnace. Thanks are also due to the Council of Scientific and Industrial Research for having granted me a fellowship for the tenure of this research. Finally it is a pleasure for me to thank all my friends and colleagues both in the National Physical Laboratory and the Solid State Physics Laboratory for all the advice and help they have given me in my research.

ABSTRACT

The process of diffusion leads to a deterioration in the lifetime of the minority carriers. An explanation for this phenomenon has been advanced, whereby it is assumed that the gradation of impurity atoms gives rise to a built-in electrostatic field and field gradient. The presence of a field gradient affects the charge density at any point which in turn affects the minority carrier lifetime.

It has been shown that for the normal impurity profiles obtained in practice, both the electrostatic field and field gradient exist. Further, the presence of a field gradient precludes the existence of space-charge neutrality. An experimental confirmation of the theory, has been obtained by measuring the parameters of sheet conductivity and the minority carrier lifetime in a thin layer near the surface at different points on the diffusion profile. The experiment has been carried out for phosphorus diffusions into a boron doped substrate. Both the modes of diffusion namely diffusion from an infinitesimally thin source, and diffusion from a constant dopant source have been checked.

The results indicate a positive confirmation of the field gradient theory.

In the second part of the work, the effect of built-in electrostatic fields and field gradients on the performance of P-N junctions has been considered. It has been shown that while an increasing electrostatic field reduces the reverse saturation current, an increasing electrostatic field gradient has just the opposite effect. The variation of reverse leakage current with electrostatic field gradient has been measured experimentally. It has been concluded that the ideal profile would be one which would give rise to an electrostatic field, but would have no field gradient. The profile which fits this specification is the exponential profile. Possible methods of obtaining an exponential profile have been discussed.

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