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Effect of thermal annealing of CBD-CdS on the electrical properties of CBD-CdS/ED-CdTe solar cell

G. K. U. P. Gajanayake¹, D. S. M. De Silva^{1*}, H. Y. R. Atapattu² and T. Thivakarasarma³

¹Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

²Department of Instrumentation and Automation Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

³Department of Physics, Faculty of Science, University of Jaffna, Sri Lanka
sujeewa@kln.ac.lk*

Thermal annealing is one of the key steps to enhance the optoelectronic properties of the CdS/CdTe solar cells. In this study, the effects of annealing temperature and annealing time of chemical bath deposited (CBD) CdS on the electrical properties of CBD-CdS/electrodeposited (ED) CdTe solar cells were investigated. CBD-CdS layers were prepared using pre-optimized deposition conditions (90 °C, 55 min) on fluorine doped tin oxide (FTO) glass substrates utilizing a bath consisted of 0.033 mol/L Cd(CH₃COO)₂, 0.667 mol/L CS(NH₂)₂ as cadmium and sulfur precursors, respectively and therein, 1 mol/L CH₃CO₂NH₄ and 0.735 mol/L NH₄OH were used for pH adjustment. Thereafter, a set of CBD-CdS samples prepared was annealed at different temperatures (350, 375 and 400 °C) by varying the annealing time (10, 20, 30, and 40 min). Consequently, CdTe thin films were electrodeposited on annealed CBD-CdS substrates using an ED-bath consisted of 1.0 mol/L CdSO₄ and 1.0 mmol/L TeO₂ at pH of 2.3, temperature of 65 °C, and potential of -650 mV against a saturated calomel electrode. The prepared glass/FTO/CBD-CdS/ED-CdTe samples were air annealed (400 °C, 20 min) and Cu/Au back contacts were deposited using thermal evaporation technique.

The electrical properties of the CBD-CdS samples were investigated by photo-electrochemical cell (PEC) study at the CBD-CdS/electrolyte junction. As per the PEC analysis, CBD-CdS sample annealed at 375 °C, 30 min has shown the highest short circuit current density (J_{sc}) of 21.5 μ A/cm², while the sample annealed at 400 °C, 10 min shown the highest open circuit voltage (V_{oc}) of 499 mV. The electrical properties of the CBD-CdS/ED-CdTe/Cu/Au devices were investigated under AM 1.5 light source and therein, CBD-CdS sample annealed at 375 °C, 30 min scored the highest J_{sc} (14.12 mA/cm²) and the one annealed at 400 °C, 10 min displayed the highest V_{oc} (616 mV). Also, the device annealed at 375 °C, 30 min showed the lowest series resistance (205 Ω) while the one annealed at 400 °C, 10 min demonstrated the highest shunt resistance (1401 Ω). Accordingly, the 375 °C, 30 min and 400 °C, 10 min were found to be the effective conditions for annealing CBD-CdS that can result in materials with better electrical properties for CBD-CdS/ED-CdTe/Cu/Au device fabrication.

Keywords: Chemical bath deposition, Electrodeposition, Thermal annealing, CdS/CdTe solar cell

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