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A study on photovoltaic parameters of mono-crystalline silicon solar cell with cell temperature

Subhash Chander [a,*], A. Purohit [a], Anshu Sharma [b], Arvind [c], S.P. Nehra [d], M.S. Dhaka [a]

[a] Department of Physics, Mohanlal Sukhadia University, Udaipur 313001, India

[b] Department of Physics, Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, Murthal, Sonepat 131039, India

[c] Department of Electronic Instrumentation and Control Engineering, Engineering College Bikaner, 334004, India

[d] Centre of Excellence for Energy and Environmental Studies, Deenbandhu Chhotu Ram University of Science and Technology, Murthal, Sonepat 131039, India

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ABSTRACT

In this study, the effect of cell temperature on the photovoltaic parameters of mono-crystalline silicon solar cell is undertaken. The experiment was carried out employing solar cell simulator with varying cell temperature in the range 25–60 °C at constant light intensities 215–515 W/m^2. The results show that cell temperature has a significant effect on the photovoltaic parameters and it controls the quality and performance of the solar cell. The open circuit voltage, maximum power, fill factor and efficiency are found to be decreased with cell temperature. The reverse saturation current increases with cell temperature and a slight increment is observed in the short circuit current. The temperature coefficient of the open-circuit voltage, fill factor and maximum output power is found to be negative while positive for the short circuit current. The relative change study of photovoltaic parameters with temperature is also undertaken. The relative changes are found from −0.0022/°C to −0.0025/°C, 0.002/°C, −0.0013/°C and −0.002/°C for open circuit voltage, short circuit current, fill factor and maximum output power respectively. The results are in good agreement with the available literature.

1. Introduction

The solar energy is one of the most important renewable energy due to its easy availability, cleanness and cheap energy resources. Now days, a number of solar energy approaches are in progress and solar cells have paid more attention due to rapidly developing technology and potential applications to cater the energy demands of the developing world and the society. The solar cell is a device which directly converts electrical energy from the solar radiation which is based on the photovoltaic effect. Mono-crystalline silicon (mc-Si) solar cell is a part of silicon solar cell family and one of the first developed and mostly used solar cells because it has a number of advantages like low maintenance cost, high reliability, noiseless and eco-friendly (Cuce et al., 2013; Cai et al., 2012; Singh and Ravindra, 2012; Solanki, 2013; Fesharaki et al., 2011; Radziemska, 2003; Amouche et al., 2012; Sharma et al., 2014). The overall performance of mc-Si solar cell strongly depends on the environmental parameters such as light intensity or irradiance, tracking angle and cell temperature (Khan et al., 2010; Skoplaki and Palyvos, 2009; Chegaar et al., 2013). Though the photovoltaic parameters like open-circuit voltage, short circuit current, maximum output power, fill factor and efficiency are generally affected with cell temperature yet maximum influence is recorded in the open circuit voltage. So, the open circuit voltage of solar cell is highly sensitive to the cell temperature. The open-circuit voltage, fill factor and maximum output power decrease with temperature while short circuit current increases with temperature therefore temperature coefficient of the open-circuit voltage, fill factor and maximum output is negative as well as positive for the short circuit current. Kim et al. (2013) reported the effect of surface texturing process on the crystalline silicon solar cells using saw-damage etching and concluded that there was no difference between the morphologies and reflectance for each surface condition after one hour of texturing process. A study of electrical characteristics of crystalline silicon cell diodes with cell temperature and frequency was undertaken by Choi et al. (2012). They found that the ideality factor was decreased in space-charge region with temperature and increased in quasi-

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +91 294 2429001; fax: +91 294 2423641.
E-mail address: sckhurdra@gmail.com (S. Chander).

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Nomenclature

I	Current
I_0	Reverse saturation current
q	Electron charge (1.602×10^{-19} Coulomb)
V	Voltage
R_s	Series resistance
n	Ideality factor
k	Boltzmann's constant (1.381×10^{-23} J/K)
T	Temperature
R_{sh}	Shunt resistance
I_L	Light generated current
I_{sc}	Short circuit current
V_{oc}	Open circuit voltage
$P_{\max}$	Maximum power point
FF	Fill factor
η	Efficiency
$I_{0\max}$	Maximum reverses saturation current
E_g	Energy band gap
$V_{\max}$	Maximum voltage
$I_{\max}$	Maximum current
P_{in}	Input power
$I(t)$	Light intensity or irradiance
A	Surface area of silicon solar cell

neutral region. Tsuno et al. (2005) investigated the dependence of temperature and irradiance on current–voltage characteristics of different solar cells using linear interpolation method and observed that the physical validity of the linear interpolation for the temperature was based on the current–voltage characteristics of the p–n junction devices. Gandia et al. (2001) suggested a new procedure to evaluate the spectral mismatch parameter as a function of light intensity for the accurate indoor measurement of current–voltage characteristics of solar cells. They analyzed that there was no need to use similar reference and test cells for the measurement of current–voltage characteristics of solar cells. Sabry and Ghitas (2008) reported the influence of temperature on series resistance of silicon solar cells and found that the series resistance was varied with temperature and illuminations. The cell temperature is the key parameter to decide the quality and performance of crystalline silicon solar cell (Dubey et al., 2013; Arjyadhara et al., 2013; Reich et al., 2009; Lammert and Schwarts, 1997; Saran et al., 2013; Coello et al., 2004). The current–voltage characteristic of a crystalline silicon solar cell (Khan et al., 2010).

$$I = I_0 \left[\exp\left(\frac{q\,(V - IR_s)}{nkT} \right) - 1 \right] + \left(V - \frac{IR_s}{R_{Sh}} \right) - I_L. \quad (1)$$

Here, I_0 is the reverse saturation current, q is electron charge, n is the ideality factor of diode, k is Boltzmann constant, T is the temperature, R_s is the series resistance, R_{sh} is the shunt resistance and I_L is the light generated current of the silicon solar cell. To control the quality and determine the performance of a solar cell, an accurate knowledge of environmental parameters is required. The environmental parameters always play a significant role on the performance characteristics of silicon solar cells. Hence, there is a need to study such parameters with accuracy and to bridge this gap, a study on the influence of cell temperature on photovoltaic parameters of mc-Si solar cell employing solar cell simulator is undertaken in this paper. The experiment was carried out with cell temperature in the range 25–60 °C at constant light intensities between 215–515 W/m^2. The relative change in photovoltaic parameters with temperature is also calculated.

Table 1
The variation of light intensity of two Halogen lamps with different glass plates and filters.

Status	Light intensity (W/m^2)
Without any glass/filter	515
With clear glass	400
With frosted glass	280
With filter (First)	215

2. Experimental details

A mono-crystalline silicon solar cell of (4 × 4) cm^2 area was used and the experiment was undertaken employing solar cell simulator with cell temperature in the range 25-60 °C at constant light intensities 215–515 W/m^2 of simulated two quartz Halogen lamps (OSRAM 50 W, 230 V each). The light intensity or irradiance of Halogen lamps was measured by solar power meter. To reduce the intensity of these lamps, various types of glass plates and a number of gray filters were introduced between assembly of lamps and lower chamber of the solar cell simulator. The light intensity of Halogen lamps with different glass plates and filters is illustrated in Table 1. The frosted glass plate helps to diffuse the light and to make it uniform especially if perforated metal plates are used as light attenuators to reduce the light intensity. An exhaust fan was used to cool the solar cell simulator during the entire period of acquisition of the experiment and a temperature control unit was also used to vary the cell temperature. The temperature control unit comprises a heater and temperature sensor to stabilize the required temperature of mc-Si solar cell and it controls the temperature from room temperature to 80 °C. The mc-Si solar cell was used as a power source, current–voltage and power–voltage characteristics were taken into account and photovoltaic parameters were calculated. The relative changes in photovoltaic parameters with cell temperature were also calculated.

3. Results and discussion

The current–voltage and power–voltage characteristics of mc-Si solar cell with cell temperature at constant light intensity are presented in Fig. 1. The observations were undertaken for cell temperatures 25 °, 40 °, 50 ° and 60 °C at the constant light intensities 215, 280, 400 and 515 W/m^2.

It is clearly visible in Fig. 1(a)–(d) that the current–voltage and power–voltage characteristics depend on the cell temperature. In the current–voltage characteristics, it is observed that the current is maximum as well as almost constant in the lower voltage range and varies with cell temperature in the range 100–120 mA, 125–140 mA, 170–190 mA and 220–240 mA at constant light intensities 215 W/m^2, 280 W/m^2, 400 W/m^2 and 515 W/m^2 respectively. The characteristics estimation follows the order of cell temperature as the successive higher underestimates the lower one. The trend is reversed about voltage 0.3 V, 0.375 V, 0.385 V and 0.4 V for intensities 515 W/m^2, 400 W/m^2, 280 W/m^2 and 215 W/m^2 respectively. Thereafter, the current is found to be decreased rapidly and reached to minimum in the range 6–8 mA with voltage between 0.5–0.58 V and the characteristics corresponding to successive lower cell temperature are existed beyond the higher.

Similarly, the power–voltage characteristics estimation follows the same trend to the current–voltage characteristics. The power is started from the range 2–8 mW for all temperature and constant light intensities. It is observed to be increased and found almost linear with cell temperature at low voltage range, reached to maximum in the range 35–90 mW for the all constant light intensities. Thereafter, it is found to be decreased rapidly at higher voltage range owing to the increasing rate of photon generation with cell temperature which revealed the rapid increment in the