IMPATT DIODE:

lmpatt diodes are manufactured having different forms such as n+pip+, p+nin+, p+nn+ abrupt junction and p+ i n+ diode configuration. The material used for manufacture of these modes are either Germanium, Silicon, Gallium Arsenide (GaAs) or Indium Phosphide (In P).

Out of these materials, highest efficiency, higher operating frequency and lower noise is obtained with GaAs. But the disadvantage with GaAs is complex fabrication process and hence higher cost. The figure below shows a reverse biased n+ pi p+ diode with electric field variation, doping concentration versus distance plot, the microwave voltage swing and the current variation.

PRINICPLE OF OPERATION:

When a reverse bias voltage exceeding the breakdown voltage is applied, a high electric field appears across the n+ p junction. This high field intensity imparts sufficient energy to the valence electrons to raise themselves into the conduction band. This results avalanche multiplication of hole-electron pairs. With suitable doping profile design, it is possible to make electric field to have a very sharp peak in the close vicinity of the junction resulting in "impact avalanche multiplication". This is a cumulative process resulting in rapid increase of carrier density. To prevent the diode from burning, a constant bias source is used to maintain average current at safe limit 10, The diode current is contributed by the conduction electrons which move to the n+ region and the associated holes which drift through

the steady field and a.c. field.· The diode ~wings into and out of avalanche conditions under the influence of that reverse bias steady field and the a.c. field.

Due to the drift *time* of holes being' small, carriers drift to the end contacts before the a.c. voltage swings the diode out of the avalanche Due to building up of oscillations, the a.c. field takes energy from the applied bias lid the oscillations at microwave frequencies are sustained across the diode. Due to this a.c. field, the hole current grows exponentially to a maximum and again decays exponentially to Zero.

During this hole drifting process, a constant electron current is induced in the external Circuit which starts flowing when hole current reaches its peak and continues for half cycle Corresponding to negative swing of the a.c. voltage as shown in figure Thus a 180 degrees Phase shift between the external current and a.c. microwave voltage provides a negative Resistance for sustained oscillations.

The resonator is usually tuned to this frequency so that the IMPATI diodes provide a High power continuous wave (CW) and pulsed microwave signals.

$$\theta = \omega\tau = \omega\frac{L}{v_d}$$

$$\omega_r \equiv \left(\frac{2\alpha' v_d I_0}{\epsilon_s A}\right)^{1/2}$$

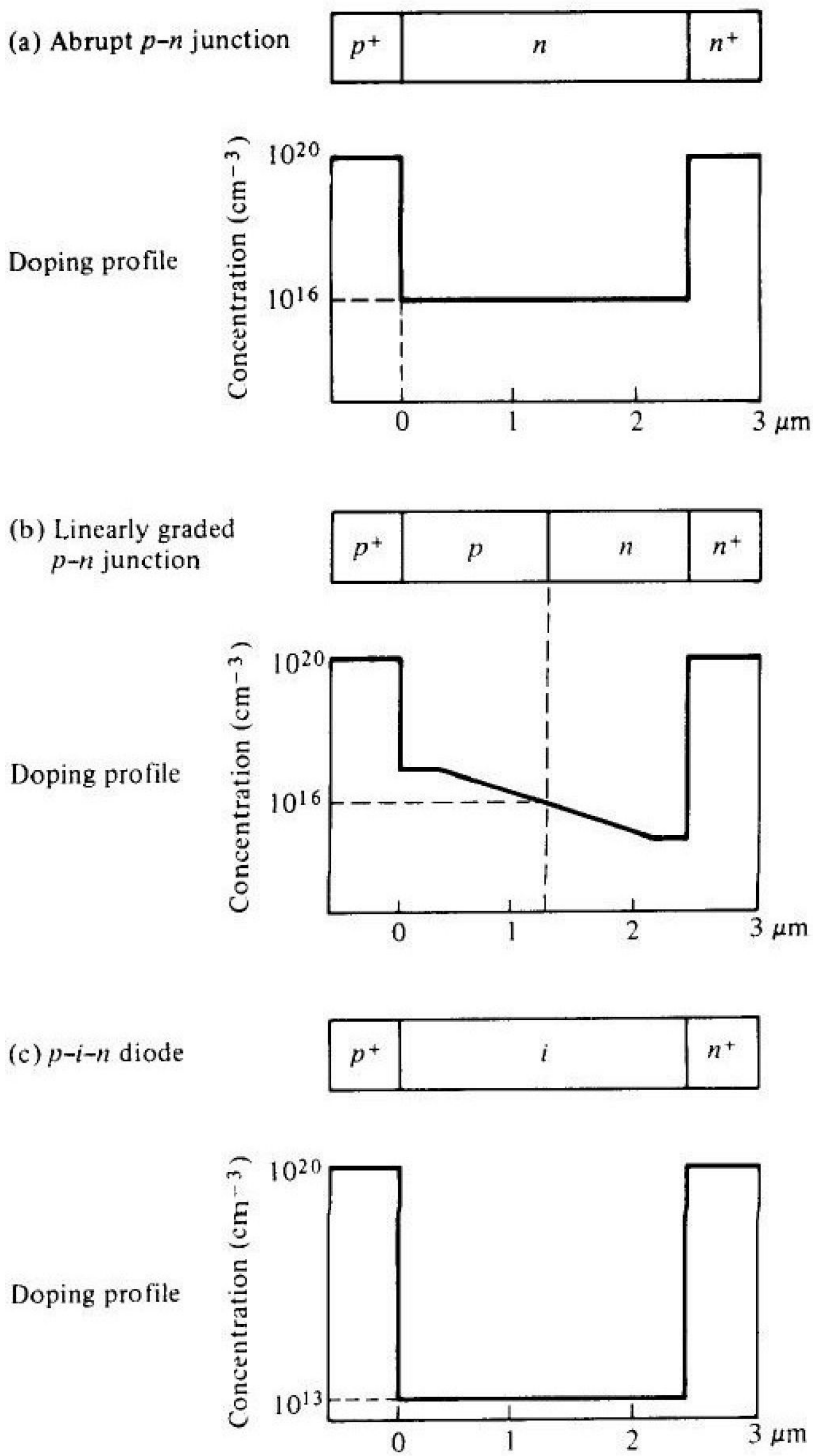
Applications of IMPATT Diodes

(i) Used in the final power stage of solid state microwave transmitters for communication purpose.

(ii) Used in the transmitter of TV system.

(iii) Used in FDM/TDM systems.

(iv) Used as a microwave source in laboratory for measurement purposes.



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