



Role of substrate architecture and modelling on photocurrent and photovoltage in TiO₂/NiO transparent photovoltaic

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ABSTRACT

A novel approach of focusing the incident light to enhance the photocurrent and photovoltage in TiO₂/NiO heterojunction-based transparent photovoltaics is deployed in this work. An ITO nanodomains periodic structure was used as a substrate to focus the incident light to the space charge region. The ITO nanodomains based device exhibited high optical transparency of ~60% in the visible-NIR region making it a better transparent photovoltaic. The modeling of the device was done by calculating the focal length of nanodomains. The approach was to simply overlap the photo-carrier generation region and space charge region for better charge collection efficiency. A significant improvement in the photocurrent (595.51±93.06 μA) and photovoltage (317.25±58.98 mV) was observed in the ITO nanodomains based TiO₂/NiO device. The ITO nanodomains based device also demonstrated spectral selective photodetection behavior with high responsivity (28±2 mA/W) and high response speed (<0.5 ms). This work fosters a novel approach to design photovoltaics of enhanced performance.

Introduction

Voracious usage of fossil fuels has rendered the gleaning of electrical energy from solar radiation an utmost priority. To harvest solar energy efficiently, a photovoltaic cell is the device used which has myriad of applications in military defense, self-powered electronics, smart windows and transportation [1–6]. Due to its simple fabrication, ability to be grown on a large area, and direct extraction of produced electrical energy it is commercialized and found its niche in solar energy harvesting [7–10]. Though, the progressive enhancement in the performance of photovoltaic has been an open topic for research and commercialization [9–12]. Despite a progressive enhancement in the performance of traditional photovoltaics, they still lack in the many application domains such as in transparent electronics, transparent window, and in transparent roof. Their limitation is mainly attributed to their low band gap, which make them opaque. Hence, in last few years enormous attention is given to the development of transparent photovoltaic (TPV) which combine high optical transparency with solar energy conversion [13].

Forty percent of energy produced in the worlds is consumed by the buildings, and this percentage is expected to increase more in the future [14]. Transparent photovoltaics provides the solution by demonstrating the ease of being integrated in the buildings, transports, and in electronic devices without compromising the aesthetics and transparency of the buildings or devices. Yet a significant attention is given to the traditional photovoltaics by adopting several approaches that improve photovoltaic parameters like open-circuit voltage (V_{OC}), short-circuit current (I_{SC}), fill factor (FF), and the dark current (I_0) forsaking TPVs [15]. Though TPVs offer high optical transparency in the visible-NIR region, yet their performance is limited by the low photovoltage and photocurrent [16].

The fundamental approaches that can be used to increase the photocurrent density in photovoltaics are to increase the optical path length of the incident light in the absorber layer and reduce the optical loss in the transparent conducting oxides. To do so in traditional photovoltaics, approaches such as interfaces/surfaces functionalization, surface texturing design schemes, decrease the free carrier absorption in

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the NIR region and increase the electrical mobility of transparent conducting oxides (TCOs) have been deployed to improve the photovoltaic performance [17–21]. The widely adopted approaches are the functionalization of the interfaces/surfaces and incorporating high carrier mobility and low carrier density TCOs in the photovoltaics due to their ease of incorporation in the heterojunction over the complexity of texturing formation of the surface [19, 20, 22–27].

The challenge of the surface modification readily causes the burdens of the additional steps, resulting in the complex in procedures with cost [28]. Direct etching of the absorber film may also lead to the formation of the surface defects and also affect the texture of the underneath films or requires the high accuracy in the surface texturing [29, 30]. The defects induced recombination is the main cause in deteriorating the electrical performance of the PVs [31]. On the other hand, TCOs suffer from low carrier mobility and high free carrier absorption in the NIR region. Therefore, in order to enhance the optoelectronic properties of TCOs, Parthiban et al., proposed Mo doped Indium Oxide as a transparent conducting oxides which showed a high mobility and low carrier density compared to the crystalline ITO thin films [20]. Similarly, many other reports have been found where a significant enhancement in carrier mobility of TCOs (H:ZnO, Al:ZnO, InZnO, GaZnO) is achieved [32–34]. Amidst different approaches, photonic and plasmonic have also demonstrated their potential in photovoltaics. Several reports are found where nanostructures such as nanosphere and nanorods were used to magnify and focus the light using the localized surface plasmon resonance [35–40]. Tediousness of making photonic structure and generation of heat due to plasmonic excitations in metal nanoparticles limit their potential and vivid usage in photovoltaics [41–43].

Many thin film TPVs such as a-Si, CdTe, polymer, and perovskite PVs were tuned to improve the performance and transparency [44–47]. Pavan et al., demonstrated very of its first kind of all oxide TiO₂/Cu₂O heterojunction transparent solar cell by spray pyrolysis. A detailed combinatorial approach is used to find the suitable thickness of Cu₂O to absorb the maximum photons [48]. Despite adopting various approaches, low transparency and limited power conversion efficiency have remained a long-standing challenge. Recently, TiO₂/NiO heterojunction TPVs have gained the huge interest due to their high optical transparency and stability, and optimum photovoltaics performance in the UV-NIR region [49, 50]. Nonetheless, in TiO₂/NiO TPVs, any interface/surface functionalization or surface modifications have not been deployed and very limited study has been done to improve the photovoltaic performance. Notwithstanding the approaches of interface/surface functionalization and surface texturing, the simplest approach is needed that can directly enhance the photo-carrier generation and photo-carrier collection efficiency without introducing surface defects and without making fabrication process tedious.

Therefore, in this work, a unique approach of ITO nanodomains for the periodic structure which is used as a substrate has been deployed to enhance the photocurrent and photovoltage in the TiO₂/NiO TPV offering high optical transparency compared to semiconductor-based PVs.

Here in this work, the ITO nanodomains substrate was used in such a way to focus the incident light over the space charge region (SCR) of TiO₂/NiO heterojunction that maintains high optical transparency. The thickness of different layers ITO, TiO₂, and NiO was kept in such a way that the ITO nanodomains can focus the incident light at its focal point which is a SCR in the TiO₂/NiO heterojunction-based device. The SCR has the highest charge collection efficiency due to the strong electric field arisen inside the SCR region. Therefore, tuning the SCR in the light-absorbing entities or made the incident light focus over the SCR can be the approach to enhance the TPV performance. This work demonstrates the importance of substrate architecture and the simplest way to use nanostructure substrate to enhance the photocurrent and photovoltage by tuning and focusing the light over the SCR. The ITO nanodomains based device showed high transparency and high photovoltage than glass substrate based TiO₂/NiO TPV.

Experimental methods

Formation of ITO nanodome structure

We used a krypton-fluoride (KrF) stepper semiconductor process with a wavelength of 248 nm for the fabrication of ITO nanodomains structure on 6-inch ITO-coated glass wafer for industrial applications. This wafer-scale fabrication method of the ITO nanodomains has rapid, high-throughput and is highly reliable for the fabrication of TPV. To fabricate the ITO nanodomains on ITO-coated glass wafer, serial processes of KrF excimer laser lithography, ITO evaporation and lift-off were performed. Firstly, a lift-off resist (LOR) 5A (MicroChem Corp.) was spin-coated at 3000 rpm for 60 s on ITO-coated glass wafer and baked at 170 °C for 5 min. Then, a KrF photoresist (DJKI-2525, Dongjin Semichem. Corp.) was spin-coated at 2000 rpm for 60 s onto the LOR layer and baked on hot plate at 100 °C for 60 s. After exposure was conducted at a dose of 20 mJ/cm² using a KrF stepper (PASS 5500/300C, ASML), post-exposure baking was done at 110 °C for 60 s. Then, the resist film was developed with a 60 s immersion in a tetramethylammonium hydroxide (TMAH) solution. During the developing process, LOR hole-arrays were continuously achieved. We deposited a 200 nm-thick ITO film on the LOR hole-array glass substrate using an electron beam evaporation process. A lift-off process was performed to remove the LOR layer in a TMAH solution under 15 min of sonication; there remained a 200 nm-height ITO nanodomains (with a radius of 180 nm) array on the glass substrate, as presented in the top-view image (Fig. 1b) and in the cross-sectional view image (Fig. 1c and 1d).

Transparent photovoltaic cell fabrication

A glass substrate and ITO nanodomains based substrate was used to fabricate TiO₂/NiO based TPV. The glass and ITO nanodomains substrates were cleaned in acetone, methanol, and deionized (DI) water by 10 min of ultra-sonication after each step and dried by N₂ flow before loading into the sputtering chamber. On the top of the glass substrate and ITO nanodomains substrate, the ITO thin film of thickness ~475 nm was deposited. The ITO was deposited at the DC sputtering power of 300 W, Ar flow of 30 sccm, and 5 mtorr of growth pressure. The reason of deposition 475 nm thick ITO on the top of glass and ITO nanodomains is discussed in the results and discussion section. The ITO layer was deposited back side of the ITO nanodome substrate so that ITO nanodomains remains at the opposite side. On the ITO nanodomains, a 40 nm ITO layer was also deposited to minimize the reflection of the incident light under the quarter wavelength anti-reflection scheme using $d = \lambda/4n$. Where d , λ , and n are the thickness, wavelength of the incident light, and refractive index of the material (ITO).

On the ITO, the TiO₂ and NiO layers were grown. The TiO₂ layer was deposited by a two-step process, where the first step involved the deposition of the Ti layer by direct current (DC) sputtering and the second step was the oxidation of the Ti layer by rapid thermal annealing (RTA). A Ti sputtering target (iTASCO, 99.99% purity) was used for the deposition of the Ti layers. The Ti layer was deposited at 300 W under 5 mtorr deposition pressure. The Ar flow was maintained at 50 sccm. The deposition time for the Ti layer was 5 min to maintain the thickness of TiO₂ 100 nm. The Ti layers were later oxidized by RTA in Ar and O₂ ambient at 500 °C for 15 min.

To deposit the NiO layer over TiO₂, a reactive sputtering method was used. A Ni sputtering target (iTASCO, 99.99% purity) was sputtered in Ar/O₂ ambient at 50 W. The deposition pressure was kept 3 m torr. The NiO layer thickness was ~20 nm. To maintain this uniformity, the substrate was rotated at 5 rpm. Prior to the deposition, the system was pumped down to the base pressure of 5×10^{-6} torr. To make the device completely transparent, silver nanowires (AgNWs, diameter ~20 nm and length ~20 μm, Nanopyrix), were spin-coated over the TiO₂/NiO heterojunction. The spin-coated films were dried at 100 °C for 2 min on a hot plate.

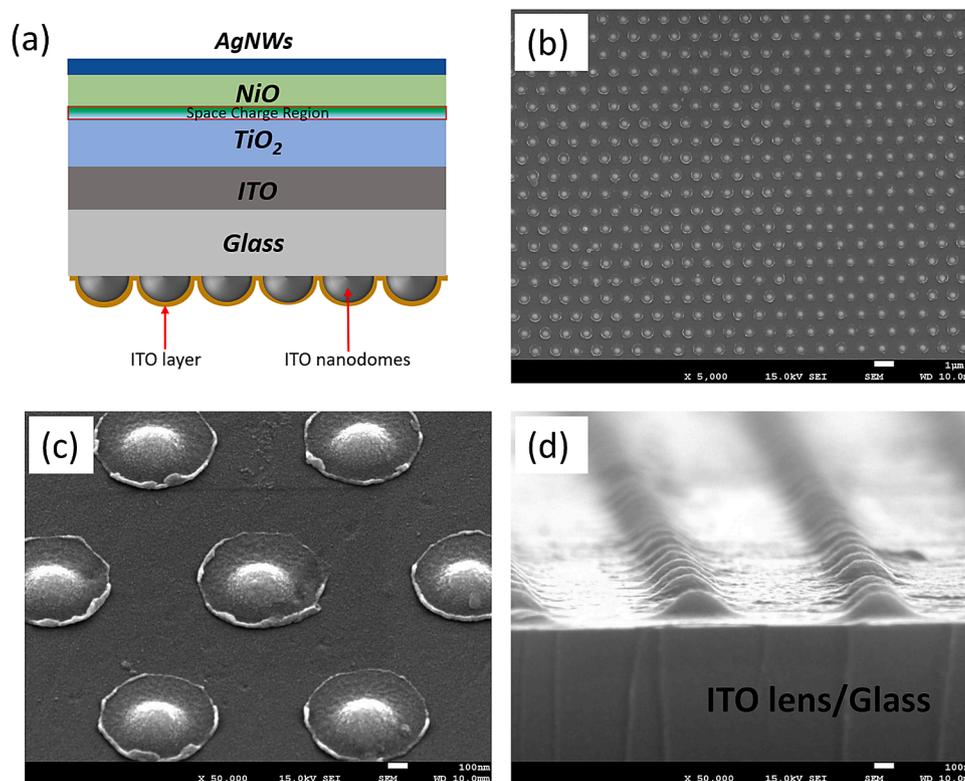


Fig. 1. (a) Schematic of the fabricated TiO_2/NiO transparent photovoltaic cells on the inverted ITO nanodomes substrate. (b) and (c) are the enlarge and zoomed-in FESEM image of ITO nanodomes structure. (d) Cross sectional FESEM image of ITO nanodomes substrate.

2.3. Characterizations

A field emission scanning electron microscope (FE-SEM, JEOL, JSM_7001F) was used to record the ITO nanodome structure and cross section image. The optical characteristics of samples were determined by transmittance plots obtained from a UV-visible-NIR spectrophotometer (Shimadzu, UV-2600). These spectra were obtained over a wavelength range of 300 to 1100 nm. A potentiostat/galvanostat (PGStat, WonA tech, Zive SP2) was used to characterize the device. Linear sweep voltammetry, with a scan rate of 100 mV/s, was applied to determine the I-V characteristics. Light-emitting diodes of wavelength 365 nm (LZ1-10UV00-0000) was used as light source. It was coupled to a dual-adjustable power supply (MCH-305DII) and a function generator (MFG-3013A, MCH Instruments). We used a solar power meter (KUSAM-MECO, KM-SPM-11) and UV light meter (Lutron, UV-340A) to calibrate the light sources with visible radiation. The active area of the device was defined by the contact area of the shadow mask.

Results and discussion

Structural and optical characterizations

A schematic diagram of the ITO nanodomes based TiO_2/NiO TPV is shown in Fig. 1(a). The ITO nanodome substrate was inverted and the ITO film that was later used as a cathode (-Ve terminal) was grown on the backside of the ITO nanodomes substrate. The ITO nanodomes are nothing but periodically patterned ITO semi-nanosphere on the glass substrate. In order to make complete transparent photovoltaic, the TiO_2 , NiO, and Ag Nanowires were deposited subsequently. To record the periodicity of ITO nanodomes, FESEM was performed over the ITO nanodomes substrate. Fig. 1(b) shows the enlarged view of the ITO nanodomes that shows the remarkably identical and periodically repeated ITO semi-nanosphere. These ITO semi-nanospheres were addressed as ITO nanodomes throughout the article. Fig. 1(c) is the

zoomed-in view of the FESEM image of Fig. 1(b). Fig. 1(c) clearly shows the identity and periodicity of the ITO nanosphere. Fig. 1(d) is the cross-sectional FESEM image of the ITO nanodomes on the glass. The cross-sectional FESEM image was used to calculate the height (h) and the radius (r) of the ITO nanodomes which was used to calculate the radius of the curvature (R) of ITO nanodomes using Eq. (1).

$$R = \frac{h^2 + r^2}{2h} \quad (1)$$

High optical transparency and a high performance are the essential demand for TPVs; therefore, the optical transparency was recorded by performing UV-visible photo-spectroscopy on the TiO_2/NiO heterojunctions. The optical transmittance spectrum of the TiO_2/NiO heterojunctions deposited on ITO nanodomes and the glass substrate, are shown in Fig. 1(a) and 1(b), respectively.

To have the comparison of ITO nanodomes based device, a TiO_2/NiO heterojunction-based TPV is also fabricated on the glass substrate at identical growth condition as used for ITO nanodomes based TPV. Both the devices showed high optical transparency. The high transparency of TiO_2/NiO TPV can be assigned to the wide bandgap of the TiO_2 and NiO layer. Both the devices showed high optical transparency of $\sim 60\%$ in the visible NIR region. The high optical transparency offered by the devices can be attributed to the high band gap of ITO, TiO_2 , and NiO. The little high optical transparency of the glass substrate-based TPV can be attributed to the large area-based device used for optical measurement. Another reason for showing comparatively low optical transmittance can be reflection offered by the ITO nanodomes during the optical measurements.

To confirm the structural phase of deposited TiO_2 and NiO thin films, XRD was performed and XRD profiles of TiO_2 and NiO are presented in Fig. 2(b) and 2(c), respectively. The observed peaks at 2θ of 27.4° , 36.1° , 41.3° correspond to the planes (110), (101), and (111), respectively, ensuring the formation of crystalline rutile phase of TiO_2 (JCPDS #88-1175). The XRD peaks at $2\theta > 50^\circ$ can be attributed to the Si substrate.

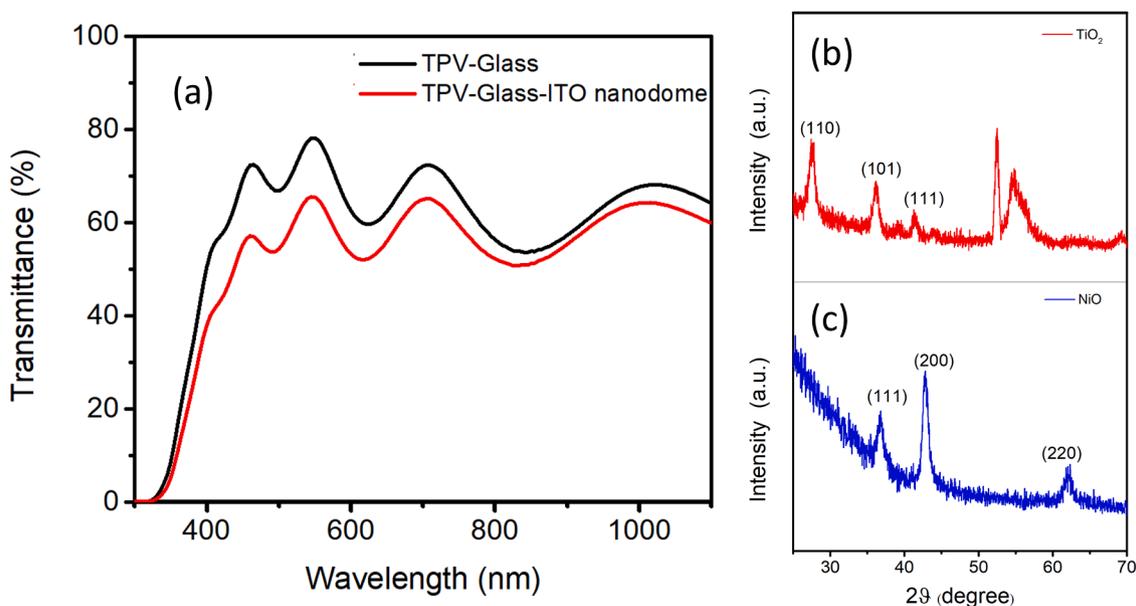


Fig. 2. (a) Optical transmittance of the TiO₂/NiO heterojunction-based TPV on the glass substrate and on the ITO nanodomains based substrate. XRD spectrum of (b) TiO₂ layer and (c) NiO layer.

Similarly, the XRD spectrum of NiO has shown peaks at 2θ of 36.8, 42.8, and 62.1° corresponds to the planes (111), (200), and (220), respectively. The obtained XRD peaks of NiO confirm the formation of crystalline NiO (JCPDS #471049).

I-V characterizations

Finally, to see the effect of substrate architecture on the device performance, the current-voltage (I-V) measurement was carried out on the TiO₂/NiO TPV grown on the glass substrate and ITO nanodomains

substrate under dark and UV illumination. The intensity of the UV incident light was also varied from 1 to 20.1 mW/cm² to see the effect of light intensity on the photocurrent and photovoltage. Fig. 3(a) and 3(b) represent the semilog scale I-V behaviour of glass substrate-based TPV and ITO nanodomains substrate-based TPV, respectively. ITO nanodome based device showed clearly a distinctive and improved performance in the I-V properties. It was interesting to note that the glass-based device did not show any enhancement in the photocurrent and photovoltage under the illumination of the light of a wavelength of 365 nm of various intensities. On the contrary, the ITO nanodome based device showed an

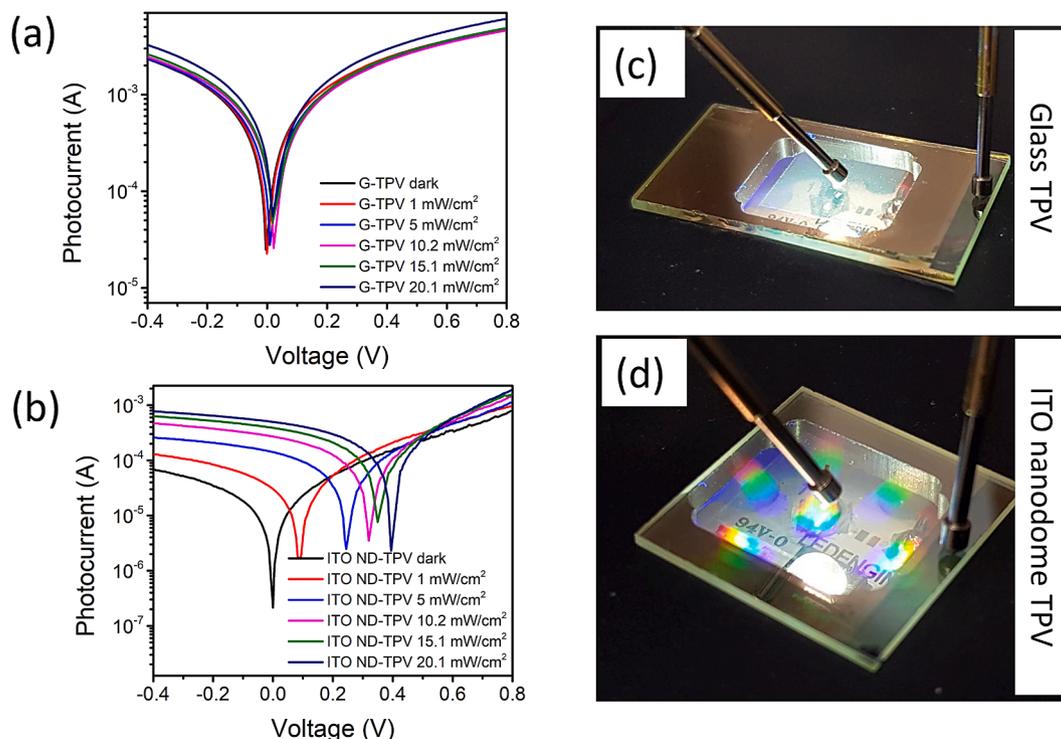


Fig. 3. (a) Semi-log scale plots of (a) glass based TiO₂/NiO TPV and (b) ITO nanodomains based TiO₂/NiO TPV. (c) Image of the glass-based TPV and (d) ITO nanodomains based TiO₂/NiO TPV.

order of significant enhancement in the photocurrent with the lowest dark current and photovoltage. The ITO nanodomains based TPV showed a high photocurrent and photovoltage of $595.51 \pm 93.06 \mu\text{A}$ and $317.25 \pm 58.98 \text{ mV}$, respectively, under the illumination of light source of wavelength 365 nm of power intensity of 20.1 mW/cm^2 . On the contrary, the glass substrate-based TPV showed low photocurrent and photovoltage of $174.92 \pm 47.65 \mu\text{A}$ and $30.20 \pm 20.15 \text{ mV}$, respectively, under the illumination of light source of identical wavelength and intensity. Though the dark/photo current obtained in glass substrate-based TPV is higher than the ITO nanodome, yet the device is lacking in photocurrent and photovoltage enhancement. A poor variation in photocurrent and high dark current in glass substrate-based device may be due to poorly focusing of the incident light around/at the TiO_2/NiO space charge region and poor quality of heterojunction which may result in the inadequate generation of photo carriers [51]. High dark current is detrimental for photovoltaics and degrades the device performance noticeably [52]. The photocurrent is directly proportional to the power intensity of the illuminated light source and follows power law ($I \propto P^0$) [49, 53, 54]. Hence, a substantial increase in the photocurrent in ITO nanodomains based TPV with the increase in the intensity of illuminated light can be attributed to the generation of more photocarriers.

In the ITO nanodome based device, the V_{oc} was improved up to $317.25 \pm 58.98 \text{ mV}$ while it remained almost unchanged in the glass substrate-based TPV. The Fig. 3(c) and 3(b) show the images of glass TPV and ITO nanodome TPV taken during the illumination of the light source. Though both devices were prepared under identical conditions and were illuminated with the same intensities of light, yet ITO nanodomains based device showed enhanced generation of photocarriers. Under identical I-V conditions measurements, the improved performance of ITO nanodomains device can be attributed to the focusing of incident light over SCR region. The in-built electric field in the SCR sweeps the photogenerated carrier more efficiently leading high photocurrent under identical illumination conditions [51]. To further investigate the transient photoresponse behavior of both the devices, I-t spectra were also recorded under the illumination of the light source of the wavelength of 365 nm with various power intensities (Fig. 4). The intensity of the light source was varied from 1 to 3.8 mW/cm^2 . The chopping frequency of the light source was 70 Hz. Under the illumination of the light of 365 nm, the ITO nanodomains based TPV has shown a significant enhancement in the photocurrent while glass-based TPV demonstrated poor performance (Fig. 4(a) and 4(b)). Since photocurrent depends on the power intensity of the illuminated light source, therefore an enhancement in the photocurrent with the increase in the intensity of illuminated light can be due to the generation of more photocarriers [53, 54].

Under the illumination of the light of 365 nm of power intensity 3.8

mW/cm^2 , the ITO nanodome based device exhibited ~ 1.7 times increase in photocurrent. Both the devices also acted as an efficient spectral transparent photodetector. The incident photon to current efficiency (IPCE) of both the devices was also calculated and shown in Fig. 5 (a). Both the devices demonstrated high spectra selectivity and high IPCE value in the UV region due to the wide band gap characteristics of the TiO_2 and NiO thin films. ITO nanodome substrate-based device exhibited approximately two times higher IPCE compared to the glass substrate-based TPV. At the wavelength of 365 nm, the IPCE was $\sim 11\%$ and $\sim 6\%$ for ITO nanodome based device and glass-based device, respectively. It is worth mentioning that the ITO nanodome based device demonstrated better IPCE over the entire detecting spectra indicating better light-detecting performance. Other photon detection parameters such as responsivity and detectivity were also calculated for different power intensities and shown in Fig. 5(b) and 5(c), respectively. The responsivity and detectivity were calculated by using equation:

$$R = \frac{I_{sc} \left(\frac{\mu\text{A}}{\text{cm}^2} \right)}{P \left(\frac{\text{mW}}{\text{cm}^2} \right)} \quad (2)$$

$$D = \frac{R}{\sqrt{2qI_d}} \quad (3)$$

Where R , I_{sc} , P , D , q , and I_d are the responsivity, photocurrent, power density, detectivity, elementary charge, and dark current, respectively. The ITO nanodome based TPV has exhibited greater responsivity and detectivity for different wavelengths. The responsivity and detectivity calculated for the ITO nanodomains based device were 28 mA/W and $7.58 \times 10^{10} \text{ Jones}$, respectively. These values indicate the enhancement of 40 % in responsivity and 1509% in detectivity compared to the glass substrate based TPV.

To have more insight into the speed of light detection, rise and fall time were also calculated. Fig. 5(d) shows the I-t response under the illumination of 365 nm of power density 3.8 mW/cm^2 . The rise time can be defined as the time taken by the device to increase photocurrent from 10 % to 90 % of its maximum value. Similarly, fall time can be defined by the time taken by the device to decay photocurrent from 90 % to the 10 % of its maximum value. All the measurements were carried out at zero bias conditions. The ITO nanodome based device demonstrated great response speed as compared to the glass substrate-based device. The rise time is reduced from 1.4 ms to 0.31 ms and fall time is reduced from 1.8 ms to 0.32 ms (Fig. 5(e) and 5(f)). The reduction in response time and enhancement in responsivity, detectivity, and IPCE, all are related to the photocurrent. Table 1 summarizes the improved performance of the self-powered NiO/TiO_2 nanodomains based UV

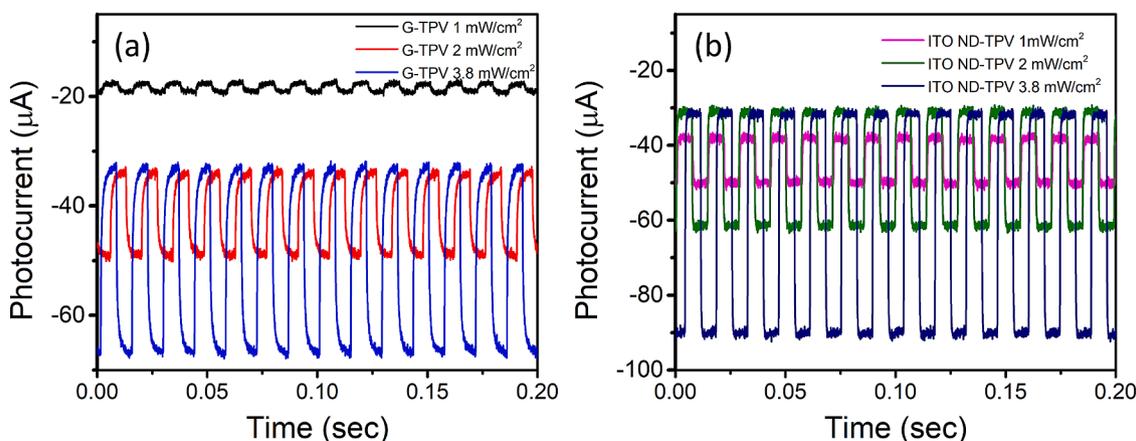


Fig. 4. (a), and (b) are the transient photocurrent response for various intensities with time for glass based TiO_2/NiO TPV and ITO nanodome based TPV, respectively.

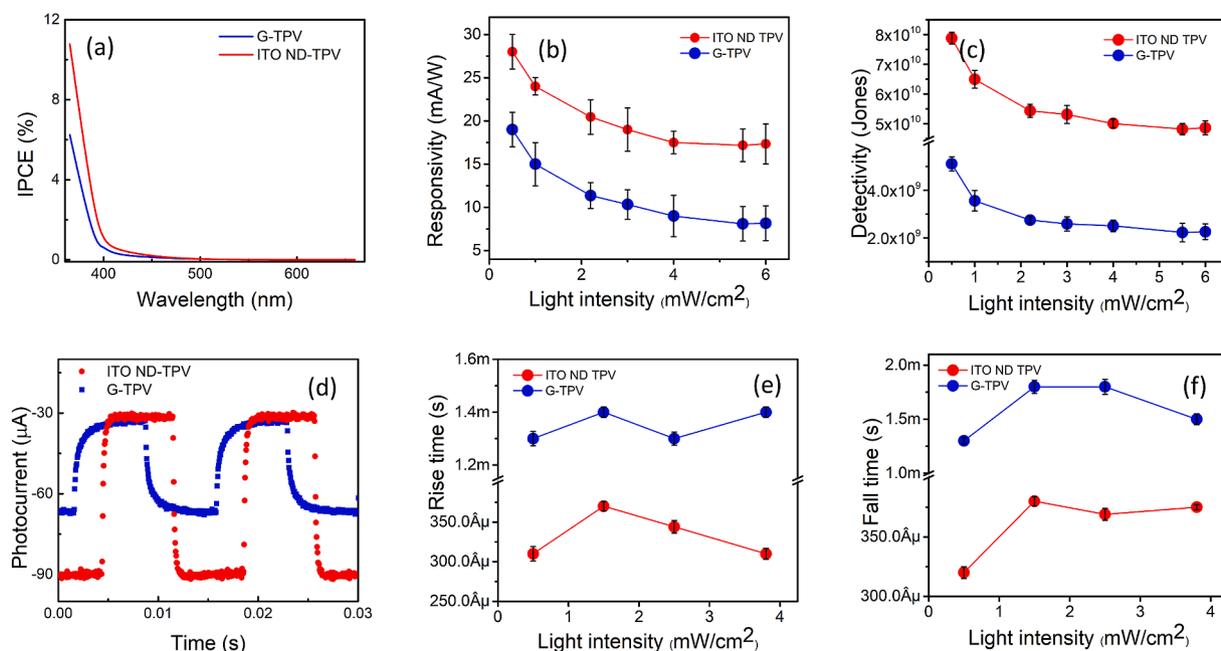


Fig. 5. (a) Incident photon to current efficiency, (b) responsivity, (c) detectivity, (d) I-t response under illumination of 365 nm of power density 3.8 mW/cm^2 , (e) rise time and (f) fall time of the glass substrate-based TPV and ITO nanodome based TPV.

Table 1

Comparison of the performance of current, self-powered NiO/TiO₂/Nanodomers UV photodetector with previously reported UV photodetectors.

Device structure	λ (nm)	Bias (V)	R (A/W)	Detectivity (Jones)	Rise time (s)	Fall time (s)	Year; Reference
Au/ZnO/TiO ₂ /FTO glass	380	6	150	-	0.18	6.63	2015 [56]
Ni/TiO ₂ /MgF ₂	300	5	4.85	-	43	10	2016 [57]
Cu/TiO ₂ /FTO glass	365	-1	0.897	4.5×10^{12}	1.12×10^{-3}	1.46×10^{-3}	2017 [58]
NiO/ZnO NW/AZO/ITO glass	380	0	0.0014	-	<0.04	<0.04	2017 [59]
ZnO NWs/FTO glass	365	5	113	-	23	73	2018 [60]
AgNW/ZnO NF/SiO ₂ /Si	365	0	0.0094	1.7×10^{11}	<1	<1	2019 [61]
Au/TiO/Au	365	4	2.0×10^{-4}	-	0.98	3.14	2019 [62]
Au/TiO ₂ /graphene oxide/Si	380	3	0.048	2.3×10^{11}	48	40	2019 [63]
FTO/ZnO QD /glass	365	3.6	21.6	-	1.9	51.1	2020 [64]
TiO ₂ -rGO/glass	375	3	2.1	-	0.051	0.058	2020 [65]
AgNW/NiO/TiO ₂ /ITO nanodomers	365	0	0.028	7.58×10^{10}	3.1×10^{-4}	3.2×10^{-4}	2021 This work

photodetector over previously reported UV photodetectors. It clearly shows the high responsivity of NiO/TiO₂/nanodomers device at 0 V with very fast response to the UV light. The enhancement in the responsivity of ITO nanodomers device can be attributed to the increase in photocurrent under the illumination of the light source due to the concentration of incident light over the space charge region. Since high detection of the light depends on the efficient generation of photo carrier, therefore, high photocurrent generation would lead to the high responsivity and high detectivity [55]. The photogenerated carriers immediately move away from the space region to respective electrodes, due to the strong built-in electric field inside the space charge region. As the result, significant response time enhancement is observed for ITO nanodome based device.

Mechanism of focusing of incident light and Energy band-diagram

To understand the enhancement in photocurrent generation a fundamental approach of optics of lenses is taken into consideration. The focusing of the incident light at the focal point by the convex and concave lens is illustrated in Fig. 6. Fig. 6(a) and 6(b) show the convergence of the incident light at focal point and divergence of incident light, respectively. Herein, ITO nanodomers acted as a convex lens to converge the light at its focal point. The modeling of the TiO₂/NiO TPV was done in such a way so that the space charge region of TiO₂/NiO

lies at the focal length of the ITO nanodome. Though, in the case of nanostructures, calculating focal length takes a diverse approach. The focal length of nanodome was calculated by taking care of several parameters such as height and curvature of nanodomers, the thickness of the films used for TPV fabrication, and refractive indices of the different layers (Table 2).

The radius of curvature was calculated using Eq. (1). The height and radius of the nanodome were $201.25 \pm 1.29 \text{ nm}$ and $180 \pm 0.70 \text{ nm}$, respectively. Then it was needed to calculate the focal length of the ITO nanodome in the air and it was calculated using the following equation:

$$F_{air} = \frac{R}{n_{ITO} - n_{air}} \quad (4)$$

Where n_{ITO} and n_{air} are the refractive index of ITO and air, respectively. Since SCR forms across the junction of TiO₂ and NiO and light passes through high refractive index material, TiO₂, the focal length of ITO nanodomers can be calculated as:

$$F_{dome} = F_{air} \times n_{TiO2} \quad (5)$$

Fig. 6(c) picturizes the complete structure of the fabricated TPV and focusing of the incident light over the SCR region.

To indicate the origin of the high photocurrent and photovoltage, a schematic band diagram of the TiO₂/NiO heterojunction fabricated on the ITO Nano domes substrate is given in Fig. 7. Fig. 7(a) and 7(b) are the

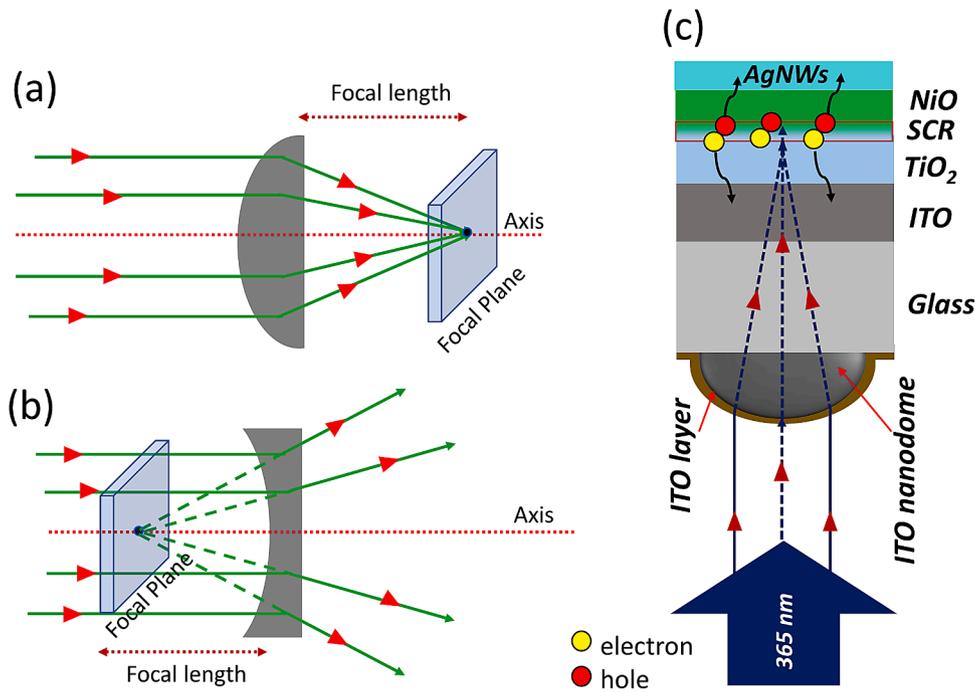


Fig. 6. Basic understanding of focusing of incident light by (a) convex lens and, (b) concave lens. (c) Schematic representation of focusing of light by ITO nanodomeres near the space charge region to enhance the generation of photocarrier.

Table 2

Calculation of focal length to determine the thickness of ITO and TiO₂ thin film to focus the light over the SCR region.

λ (nm)	n_{TiO_2}	F_{air} (nm)	n_{NiO}	F_{dome} (nm)
365	2.18	153.49±0.60	3.75	575.60±2.26

band diagram of TiO₂/NiO TPV fabricated on the glass substrate and the ITO nanodomeres substrate, respectively. Fig. 7(a) shows the absorbance of unfocused light in the TiO₂ material. On the contrary, Fig. 7(b) shows the absorbance and focus of incident light over SCR. By using the ITO nanodome structure and suitable modeling of the TiO₂/NiO device, the incident light can be focused over the SCR region. By focusing the light over the SCR, the overlapping of the photo carrier generation region and the SCR can be achieved. There exists a strong built-in electric field in the SCR that efficiently separates the photogenerated carrier giving high photocurrent and photovoltage. The built-in potential was created by the differences in the Fermi level of TiO₂ and NiO. The TiO₂ and NiO

formed a type-II heterostructure, with a cliff that facilitated the electron transfer from the NiO to TiO₂.

Several reports are found where nanostructures such as nanosphere and nanorods were used to magnify and focus the light using the localized surface plasmon resonance [35, 36]. Therefore, this work provides a direct approach to focus the light over SCR for better charge collection efficiency in photovoltaics and improved performance of the UV photodetector without using any other metallic nanostructure integration approach.

Conclusions

A novel and efficient method was demonstrated to improve the photocurrent and photovoltage in TiO₂/NiO TPV by using a periodic nanostructured ITO nanodome substrate. A fundamental approach of optics of lenses was used to focus the light over high electric field region (SCR). The TPV was modeled in such a way that the photo carrier generation region and SCR overlaps for enhanced photogenerated

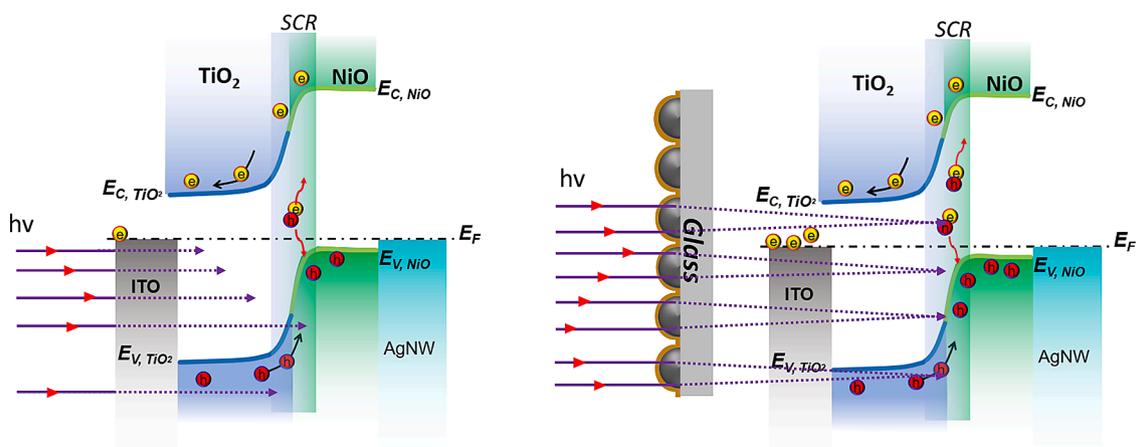


Fig. 7. Schematic band diagram of (a) glass/ITO based TiO₂/NiO transparent photovoltaic and (b) ITO nanodome based TiO₂/NiO transparent photovoltaic.

charge carrier collection efficiency. A significant improvement in the photocurrent (~3 times) and photovoltage (~10 times) was recorded for ITO nanodomains based TiO₂/NiO device compared to TiO₂/NiO TPV fabricate on glass. ITO nanodome substrate-based device also showed a remarkable spectral selectivity in the UV region with high responsivity (28±2 mA/W) and high response speed (<0.5 ms) under self-biasness. Hence, this work provided a simplest and easiest approach to improve the photocurrent and photovoltage that can be benefactors for photovoltaics domain.

Credit author statement

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Declaration of Competing Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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