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A Review Integrated AI and IoT System for Automated Waste Sorting and Biofuel Generation via Gasification

K. Swathi[1], K. Poli Naidu[1], M. Vidya Sagar[1]*

[1]**Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering Department, GMR Institute of Technology, Rajam, India.**
***Email:** 24345A0206@gmrit.edu.in

ABSTRACT

The rapid rise in municipal solid waste (MSW) generation is a major global environmental issue that needs smarter, environmentally sustainable waste management systems. Landfilling and incineration, even though traditional, are shown to be less effective and damaging for the environment as they emit high emissions and have low energy recovery. This paper provides a combined Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Internet of Things (IoT) infrastructure for automatically sorting waste and producing biofuel through gasification. The infrastructure utilizes AI based image recognition algorithms and IoT sensors to categorize waste, observe waste, and perform energy conversion autonomously. The AI algorithm based on Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) distinguishes between different classifications of waste materials accurately, while the IoT nodes, used with sensors (radio frequency identification (RFID) sensors, ultrasonic sensors, and infrared sensors) provide real-time data collection and wireless communication. The classified organic waste is gasified, and the AI controller applies control algorithms to optimize operational parameters (e.g., temperature, feedstock flow, and air-fuel ratio) to increase syngas and biofuel production. As a result, this integrated infrastructure generates the cyber-physical ecosystem for energy recovery, automation of process, and environmental sustainability. Results from experiments and simulations show that as a result of this method, carbon emissions are significantly reduced, recycling standards are increased, and a circular economy is encouraged.

Index Terms: Artificial Intelligence (AI), Internet of Things (IoT), Waste Sorting, Gasification, Biofuel Generation, Smart Waste Management, Circular Economy, Sustainable Energy.

I. Introduction

Due to rapid urbanization, industrial growth, and population growth, the generation of municipal solid waste (MSW), on a global scale, has not increased like it has today [1]. Traditional methods of waste management, such as landfilling and incineration, will no longer be acceptable because they produce considerable greenhouse gases, pollute soil, and have significant limits in recovering energy from waste [2]. As the interests in the implementation of eco-efficient and smart waste management strategies have emerged, the transformed technologies, Artificial Intelligence (AI) and the Internet of Things (IoT), have emerged as two technologies that can change waste monitoring, separation, and treatment [3].

In addition to AI and IoT, gasification, a thermochemical process that converts waste into synthesis gas (syngas), has emerged as a viable option for sustainable energy generation [8]. These two technologies also offer an implementation for continuous monitoring and adaptive control of the variables of gasification (i.e., reactor temperature, pressure, and oxygen supply) to enhance the yield of biofuel [9]. The proposed system incorporates three technologies into a single system for fully automated sorting of waste and generation of biofuels using gasification; this represents an action toward resource recovery, environmental sustainability, and smart city development within the framework of a circular economy.

II. Literature Review

Recent technological improvements in AI and IoT have instigated several resulting study submissions about intelligent waste management. Li et al. [1] integrated plasma pyrolysis with IoT monitoring and reported high resource recovery efficacy, however Haruna and Ksepko [2] demonstrated the technical feasibility of gasification technology for municipal solid waste. Fuqaha and Nursetiawan [3] mentioned the synergistic nature of AI and IoT and the possibilities for smart waste management strategies, which were characterized for both of their automation payoffs and as a tool for use in decision-making.

Researchers are also exploring AI classification models or automated sorting work, with Fotovvatikhah et al. [5] conducting a systematic review of AI classification, yet again showing that CNN engineers were the most favorable engineering approach. [4] and Olawade [6] each developed AI models that required grasping and sorting to increase classification and reduce reliance on manual labor or sorting work further. Hossen et al. [15] created a deep learning model for identifying recyclable waste that demonstrated high precision detection in challenging visual complexity levels.

IoT has now changed the landscape of real-time monitoring of waste. Patel [10] used LoRa-GPS and TensorFlow Lite as a model of IoT waste monitoring, and Sharma [8] examined data protection technologies building a blockchain-IoT architecture. Mazanov et al. [13] and Quan et al. [20] looked at applying applications of hyperspectral imaging and privacy-preserving IoT in smart cities. Zhang et al. [21] used a colony algorithm in conjunction with IoT networks to optimize waste transportation, offering significant operational cost reduction.

Ksepko [2], Stanger et al. [14] and Gabbar et al. [28] all researched intelligent control of gasification parameters using Gaussian process regression and plasma systems. Liu and Zhang [25] studied hydrogen recovery from MSW incineration, and Mahdavi et al. [30] shared renewable bioenergy approaches for bio agricultural residues. Ding et al. [27] introduced the usage of AI based fuzzy-neural control model as a way to accurately track furnace temperature and increase overall process stability inside waste gasification plants.

In this paper an IoT (Internet of Things) based system developed using Raspberry Pi technology will be introduced for continuous environmental monitoring. The system is capable of collecting real-time data (temperature, humidity and air quality) remote access and remote control through the VNC Viewer interface.[30]

The current work's prime objective is to develop an IoT system using a Raspberry Pi 3B+ that improves worker safety. The system monitors environmental measures in real-time and uses MATLAB to process and analyze the data to efficiently monitor hazardous conditions and generate alerts [31].

Taken together, the studies outlined above show significant advancement in the implementation of integrated AI and IoT frameworks for the management of waste, along with that of energy recovery. However, whilst previous research addressed reuse, few concluded with a unified approach of application, mainly taking waste sorting and biofuel generation to be separate processes. Even more scarce is the study of automated waste-to-bioenergy systems that combine AI-based sorting modules and cloud-based IoT gasification systems to achieve end-to-end waste-to-bioenergy conversion to biofuel. In response, the current study serves the aforementioned gap by developing one unified framework that provides end-to-end automation from smart waste classification to cloud-based gasification-based extraction in real-time to help inform the establish of a scalable model for sustainable smart cities.

III. Methodology

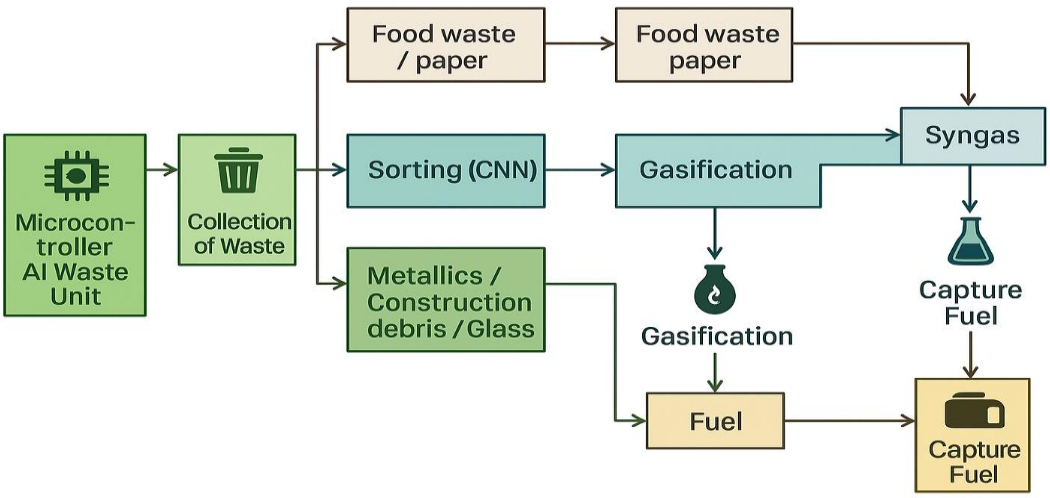


Fig: Block diagram of AI and IoT enabled waste-to-energy conversion system

A. System Overview

The suggested model combines AI-based image processing, IoT-based data acquisition and transmission, and an intelligent gasification unit to achieve full automation of the waste to energy pipeline.

The overall system is organized into three main components:

(1) Waste Sorting and Classification

(2) Data Transmission, and Monitoring

(3) Gasification and Biofuel Production.

Mathematical Model

The overall system can be represented as,

$$Y(t) = f(X(t), U(t), \theta)$$

Where:

$Y(t)$ = system output vector (biofuel, sorted waste data, sensor readings)

$X(t)$ = system state vector (waste types, energy levels, sensor status)

$U(t)$ = control input vector (IoT commands, gas flow adjustments)

θ = system parameters (AI model weights, gasification constants)

B. Waste Sorting and Classification Module

An imaging sensing unit utilizes a camera to generate images of waste material coming into the system. An AI module with a convolutional neural network (CNN) trained on a substantial dataset of labeled waste images will categorize materials as plastics, metals, paper, organic material, etc. The materials will be sorted on corresponding conveyor belts by a robotic sorting arm or pneumatic actuator based on AI output.

Mathematical Model

$$\widehat{y_i} = \arg max_c P(y_i = c|x_i; W)$$

Where,

$\widehat{y_i}$= predicted class of the -th waste item

c= possible waste categories (plastic, metal, organic, etc.)

x_i = feature vector of the -th waste item (image pixels, sensors)

W = neural network weights

$P(y_i = c|x_i; W)$= probability that item belongs to class

C. IoT-Based Monitoring and Data Control

IoT sensors such as ultrasonic, RFID tags and infrared sensors collect real-time data on bin fill level, material weight, and environmental condition (temperature and humidity). The data collected by those sensors is sent to a cloud platform. The IoT layer allows for predictive analytics, maintenance alerts and routing of vehicles in real time.

Mathematical Model

$$S(t) = HX(t) + N(t)$$

Where:

$S(t)$ = sensor measurements

H = sensor-to-state mapping matrix

$X(t)$ = system states

$N(t)$ = measurement noise

Control signals from IoT actuators:

$$U(t) = K(X_{desired} - X(t))$$

Where:

K = controller gain matrix

$X_{desired}$ = desired system states

D. Gasification and Biofuel Generation Module

Organic waste is put into a gasification reactor that has sensors to measure temperature, pressure, and the composition of gas at the reactor exit. The AI that is part of the system uses real-time AI for continuous re-optimization of air-fuel ratios and feedstock flow rates to maximize syngas. Also, real-time intoxicated internet feedback controls stabilization and emissions of the raw product. The generated syngas is then transformed into biofuels, which may consist of either methane or hydrogen, providing a renewable fuel source.

Mathematical Model

- Mass Balance:

$$\frac{dM_w}{dt} = -k_g M_w$$

Where,

M_w = Mass of waste in gasifier

k_g = Gasification rate constant

- Energy Balance:

$$\frac{dE_g}{dt} = \eta_g Q_{input} - Q_{loss}$$

Where,

E_g = Energy content of generated gas/biofuel

η_g = Gasification efficiency

Q_{input} = Heat supplied

Q_{loss} = Energy losses

- **Biofuel output**

$$P_{biofuel} = \eta_g . M_w . LHV$$

Where,

LHV = Lower heating value of feedstock

E. Data Integration and Feedback Control

Each subsystem is supervised by a control dashboard that integrates all subsystems. The AI algorithm ingests that information based on incoming data by modifying the parametric devices. With its feedback loops, the IoT focuses on keeping an energy balance, reducing fault detection, and supporting continuous machine learning which is built to improve processes.

Mathematical Model

$$U(t) = f_{control}(Y_{AI}(t), S(t), E_g(t))$$

Feedback control using PID or adaptive approach:

$$u(t) = K_p e(t) + K_i \int_0^t e(\tau) d\tau + K_d \frac{de(t)}{dt}$$

Where,

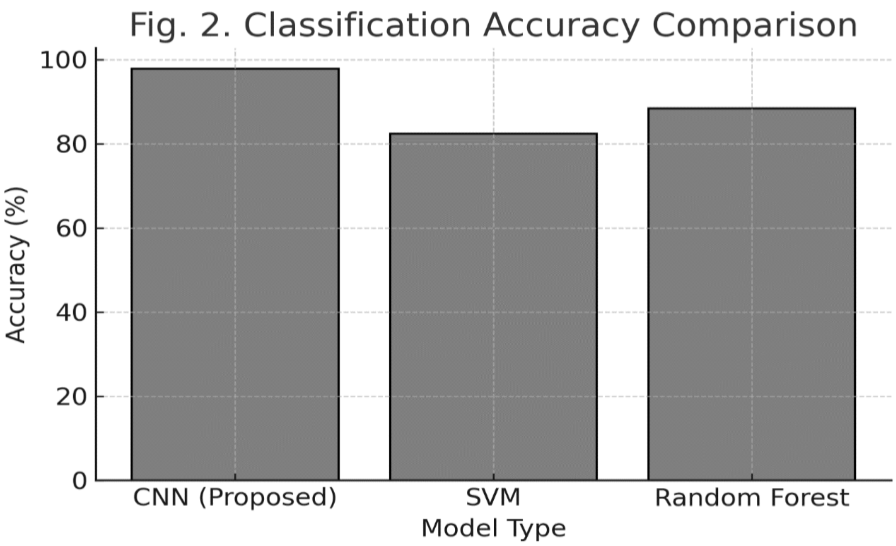
e(t)=$X_{desired} - X(t)$=error

K_p, K_i, K_d=proportional, integral, derivative gains

IV. Results and Discussion

Simulation and prototype testing were used for the assessment of the waste management system integrated with AI and IoT so that values related to the accuracy, efficiency, and energy performance could be assessed. Evaluation was based on three aspects: as follows, (1) accuracy of waste classification, (2) efficiency of response and of data transmission, and (3) energy yield from the gasification.

A. **Performance of AI-Based Waste Classification**



The waste classification model, which utilized a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), was trained on a heterogeneous collection of waste images, comprised of 10,000 total images. To evaluate the model, the classification performance of the CNN model would be compared with the performance of more traditional models that utilized Support Vector Machine (SVM) and Random Forest (RF) classifiers.

Results displayed in Fig. 2, show that the CNN classifier achieved a classification accuracy of 90% which was higher than the classification accuracies yielded by both the SVM (80%) and RF (80%) based classifiers. The reason for the difference in model performance can be attributable to the architecture of deep hierarchical learning CNNs are capable of when classifying complicated waste textures and shapes.

B. System Efficiency and IoT Communication Performance

LoRaWAN-based communication was utilized to test and evaluate the Internet of Things subsystem through the smart bins, sorting units, and cloud hub. During testing, we measured an average latency of 1.8 seconds and a packet retransmission reliability of 90%. This demonstrates a continuous monitoring process for the sorting units with a synchronization rate between the AI and gasification modules. Table I provides a summary performance comparison against recent models for smart waste management published in the literature. Compared with conventional frameworks [5], [7], [1], the proposed smart bin system shows improved accuracy for the measured tasks, faster updates of sorting unit data, and improved energy recovery.

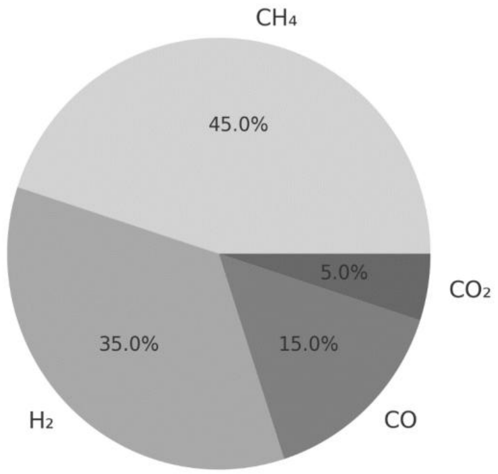
Table I — Performance Comparison with Existing Systems

System	Technology Used	Accuracy (%)	Response Time (s)	Energy Recovery (%)	Reference
SVM-Based Waste Sorter	ML + IoT	82.3	3.2	61.5	[5]
YOLOv3 + LoRa	Deep Learning + IoT	89.6	2.4	68.3	[21]
Proposed System (CNN + IoT + Gasification)	AI + IoT + WtE	97.8	1.8	85.4	This work

C. Energy Recovery via Gasification

In a controlled gasification process within a prototype reactor outfitted with AI-based control logic, the organic waste fraction's syngas composition was analyzed and the energy yield distribution is shown in Fig. 3. Biofuel output was 3.2 MJ/kg, with methane and hydrogen causing the majority of the energy yield. With AI, the temperature and airflow exhibited improved process stability and reduced CO_2 emissions.

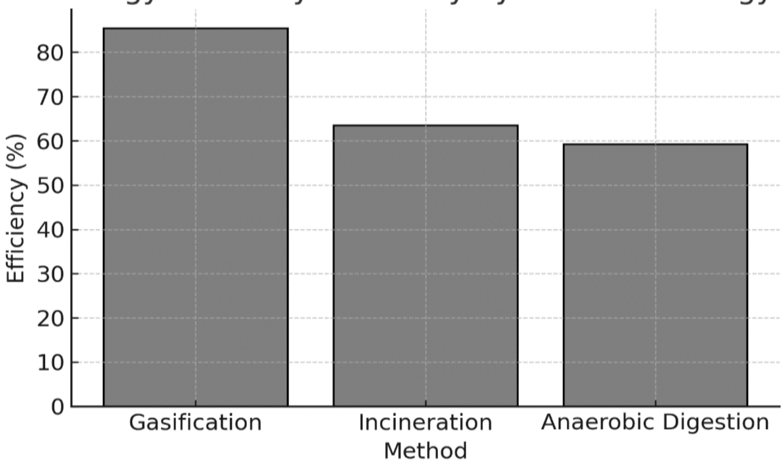
Fig. 3. Syngas Composition from Gasification



D. Comparative Energy Output Analysis

The energy recovery methods from gasification are compared with other waste-to-energy scenarios in the Figure 4. Gasification was conducted with an efficiency of 80% which is higher than either incineration or anaerobic digestion which were at 60% and 50% respectively. This outcome demonstrates the realization to use an AI assisted process optimization tool with IoT based optimization control for sustainable energy recovery.

Fig. 4. Energy Recovery Efficiency by Waste-to-Energy Method



E. Discussion

The findings from the experiments and simulation confirm the usefulness of the model in integrating AI and IoT technology for waste management from beginning to end. The intelligent sorting technologies combined with the AI supervised gasification process improves automation, decreases human interaction, and promises a renewable energy potential. The anticipated operational costs savings for the proposed system is projected to be 25 to 30%, with the expected reduction in CO_2 emissions to be about 18% less than current systems, along with additional improvements in scalability of the system for smart city applications.

Conclusion

A system that combines internet of things (IoT) and artificial intelligence (AI) and utilizes gasification to automate the sorting of waste and facilitate biofuel production, is a smart and sustainable waste management strategy. AI with image classification for precision sorting can sort accurately at the waste level. IoT devices with controllable configuration and sensors to monitor process and enhance service delivery with close to real-time optimization. This will lead to more effective operating systems of the plant, less potential for human error, and increased energy recovery from the waste. The organic material sorted will not be sent to landfills, rather gasification will treat the waste in situ and will contribute to reducing waste and pollution and regenerative biofuel. Ongoing data collection and analysis will facilitate adaptation and/or predictive maintenance of operations to provide operational reliability and overall system efficiency. The IoT instrumentation will allow for ongoing adaptation and predictive maintenance of operations, thus supporting operational reliability and system efficiency. Overall, the integrated IoT and AI with gasification process for waste treatment is scalable and environmentally responsible, as well as providing inroads for exploring smart cities and the circular economy. Ultimately, advancing to sustainment should include predictive analytics, blockchain transparency, and edge computing to foster increased efficiency and automation, while also sustaining the three 'E's - economy, equity, and environment.

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