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A Survey of Routing Protocols in Mobile Ad Hoc Networks

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Abstract— *A Mobile Ad Hoc Network (MANET) is a collection of multi-hop wireless mobile nodes that communicate with each other without centralized control or established infrastructure. Wireless links in this network are highly error-prone and can fail frequently due to node mobility, interference, and less infrastructure. Therefore, routing in MANET is a critical task due to the highly dynamic environment. In recent years, several routing protocols have been proposed for mobile ad hoc networks, the most prominent of which are DSR, AODV, and TORA. This research paper provides an overview of these protocols by presenting their characteristics, functionality, advantages and limitations and then benchmarks them to analyze their performance. The goal is to see how the performance of these protocols can be improved.*

Index Terms*—AODV, DSR, MANET, TORA*

I. INTRODUCTION

The wireless network can be classified into two types: Infrastructured or Infrastructure less. **In Infrastructured wireless** networks**,** the mobile node can move while communicating, the base stations are fixed and as the node goes out of the range of a base station, it gets into the range of another base station. The fig. 1, given below, depicts the Infrastructured wireless network.

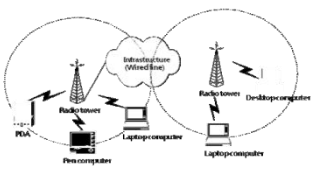

Fig. 1: Infrastructured Wireless Networks

In Infrastructureless or Ad Hoc wireless network, the mobile node can move while communicating, there are no fixed base stations and all the nodes in the network act as routers. The mobile nodes in the Ad Hoc network dynamically establish routing among themselves to form their own network 'on the fly'. This type of network can be shown as in fig. 2.

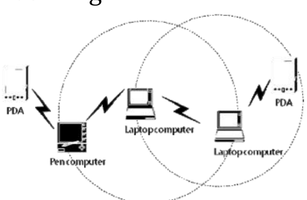

Fig. 2: Infrastructureless or Ad Hoc Wireless Networks

Mobile Ad Hoc Network (MANET) is a collection of wireless mobile nodes forming a temporary/short-lived network without any fixed infrastructure where all nodes are free to move about arbitrarily and where all the nodes configure themselves. In MANET, each node acts both as a router and as a host & even the topology of network may also change rapidly. Some of the challenges in MANET include:

1) Unicast routing
2) Multicast routing
3) Dynamic network topology
4) Speed
5) Frequency of updates or Network overhead
6) Scalability
7) Mobile agent based routing
8) Quality of Service
9) Energy efficient/Power aware routing
10) Secure routing

The key challenges faced at different layers of MANET are shown in Fig. 3. It represents layered structure and approach to ad hoc networks.

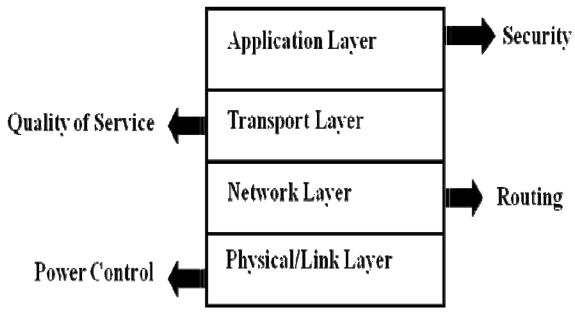

Fig.3: MANET Challenges

2. ROUTING PROTOCOLS

A routing protocol is needed whenever a packet needs to be transmitted to a destination via number of nodes and numerous routing protocols have been proposed for such kind of ad hoc networks. These protocols find a route for packet delivery and deliver the packet to the correct destination. The studies on various aspects of routing protocols have been an active area of research for many years. Many protocols have been suggested keeping applications and type of network in view. Basically, routing protocols can be broadly classified into two types as (a) Table Driven Protocols or Proactive Protocols and (b) On-Demand Protocols or Reactive Protocols

2.1 Table Driven or Proactive Protocols:

In Table Driven routing protocols each node maintains one or more tables containing routing information to every other node in the network. All nodes keep on updating these tables to maintain latest view of the network. Some of the existing table driven or proactive protocols are: DSDV [6], [19], DBF [7], GSR [24], WRP [23] and ZRP [28], [13].

2.2 On Demand or Reactive Protocols:

In these protocols, routes are created as and when required. When a transmission occurs from source to destination, it invokes the route discovery procedure. The route remains valid till destination is achieved or until the route is no longer needed. Some of the existing on demand routing protocols are: DSR [8], [9], AODV [4], [5] and TORA [26], [27].

The emphasis in this research paper is concentrated on the survey and comparison of various On Demand/Reactive Protocols such as DSR, AODV and TORA as these are best suited for Ad Hoc Networks. The next sub-section describes the basic features of these protocols.

3. DYNAMIC SOURCE ROUTING [8, 9]

Dynamic Source Routing (DSR) is an Ad Hoc routing protocol which is based on the theory of source-based routing rather than table-based. This protocol is source-initiated rather than hop-by-hop. This is particularly designed for use in multi hop wireless ad hoc networks of mobile nodes. Basically, DSR protocol does not need any existing network infrastructure or administration and this allows the Network to be completely self-organizing and self-configuring. This Protocol is composed of two essential parts of route discovery and route maintenance. Every node maintains a cache to store recently discovered paths. When a node desires to send a packet to some node, it first checks its entry in the cache. If it is there, then it uses that path to transmit the packet and also attach its source address on the packet. If it is not there in the cache or the entry in cache is expired (because of long time idle), the sender broadcasts a route request packet to all of its neighbors asking for a path to the destination. The sender will be waiting till the route is discovered. During waiting time, the sender can perform other tasks such as sending/forwarding other packets. As the route request packet arrives to any of the nodes, they check from their neighbor or from their caches whether the destination asked is known or unknown. If route information is known, they send back a route reply packet to the destination otherwise they broadcast the same route request packet. When the route is discovered, the required packets will be transmitted by the sender on the discovered route. Also an entry in the cache will be inserted for the future use. The node will also maintain the age information of the entry so as to know whether the cache is fresh or not. When a data packet is received by any intermediate node, it first checks whether the packet is meant for itself or not. If it is meant for itself (i.e. the intermediate node is the destination), the packet is received otherwise the same will be forwarded using the path attached on the data packet. Since in Ad hoc network, any link might fail anytime. Therefore, route maintenance process will constantly monitors and will also notify the nodes if there is any failure in the path. Consequently, the nodes will change the entries of their route cache.

3.1 Benefits and Limitations of DSR

One of the main benefit of DSR protocol is that there is no need to keep routing table so as to route a given data packet as the entire route is contained in the packet header. The limitations of DSR protocol is that this is not scalable to large networks and even requires significantly more processing resources than most other protocols. Basically, In order to obtain the routing information, each node must spend lot of time to process any control data it receives, even if it is not the intended recipient. The flowchart [17] for DSR Protocol is given below:

4. ADOV (AD HOC ON DEMAND DISTANCE VECTOR) [4],[5]

AODV is a variation of Destination-Sequenced Distance-Vector (DSDV) routing protocol which is collectively based on DSDV and DSR. It aims to minimize the requirement of system-wide broadcasts to its extreme. It does not maintain routes from every node to every other node in the network rather they are discovered as and when needed & are maintained only as long as they are required.

The key steps of algorithm used by AODV for establishment of unicast routes are explained below.

4.1 Route Discovery

When a node wants to send a data packet to a destination node, the entries in route table are checked to ensure whether there is a current route to that destination node or not. If it is there, the data packet is forwarded to the appropriate next hop toward the destination. If it is not there, the route discovery process is initiated. AODV initiates a route discovery process using Route Request (RREQ) and Route Reply (RREP). The source node will create a RREQ packet containing its IP address, its current sequence number, the destination's IP address, the destination's last sequence number and broadcast ID. The broadcast ID is incremented each time the source node initiates RREQ. Basically, the sequence numbers are used to determine the timeliness of each data packet and the broadcast ID & the IP address together form a unique identifier for RREQ so as to uniquely identify each request. The requests are sent using RREQ message and the information in connection with creation of a route is sent back in RREP message. The source node broadcasts the RREQ packet to its neighbors and then sets a timer to wait for a reply. To process the RREQ, the node sets up a reverse route entry for the source node in its route table. This helps to know how to forward a RREP to the source. Basically a lifetime

is
associated with the reverse route entry and if this entry is not used within this lifetime, the route information is deleted. If the RREQ is lost during transmission, the source node is allowed to broadcast again using route discovery mechanism.

4.2 Expanding Ring Search Technique

The source node broadcasts the RREQ packet to its neighbors which in turn forwards the same to their neighbors and so forth. Especially, in case of large network, there is a need to control network-wide broadcasts of RREQ and to control the same; the source node uses an expanding ring search technique. In this technique, the source node sets the Time to Live (TTL) value of the RREQ to an initial start value. If there is no reply within the discovery period, the next RREQ is broadcasted with a TTL value increased by an increment value. The process of incrementing TTL value continues until a threshold value is reached, after which the RREQ is broadcasted across the entire network.

4.3 Setting up of Forward Path

When the destination node or an intermediate node with a route to the destination receives the RREQ, it creates the RREP and unicast the same towards the source node using the node from which it received the RREQ as the next hop. When RREP is routed back along the reverse path and received by an intermediate node, it sets up a forward path entry to the destination in its routing table. When the RREP reaches the source node, it means a route from source to the destination has been established and the source node can begin the data transmission.

4.4 Route Maintenance

A route discovered between a source node and destination node is maintained as long as needed by the source node. Since there is movement of nodes in mobile ad hoc network and if the source node moves during an active session, it can reinitiate route discovery mechanism to establish a new route to destination.
Conversely, if the destination node or some intermediate node moves, the node upstream of the break initiates Route Error (RERR) message to the affected active upstream neighbors/nodes. Consequently, these nodes propagate the RERR to their predecessor nodes. This process continues until the source node is reached. When RERR is received by the source node, it can either stop sending the data or reinitiate the route discovery mechanism by sending a new RREQ message if the route is still required.

4.5 Benefits and Limitations of AODV

The benefits of AODV protocol are that it favors the least congested route instead of the shortest route and it also supports both unicast and multicast packet transmissions even for nodes in constant movement. It also responds very quickly to the topological changes that affects the active routes. AODV does not put any additional overheads on data packets as it does not make use of source routing.

The limitation of AODV protocol is that it expects/requires that the nodes in the broadcast medium can detect each other's broadcasts. It is also possible that a valid route is expired and the determination of a reasonable expiry time is difficult. The reason behind this is that the nodes are mobile and their sending rates may differ widely and can change dynamically from node to node. In addition, as the size of network grows, various performance metrics begin decreasing. AODV is vulnerable to various kinds of attacks as it based on the assumption that all nodes must cooperate and without their cooperation no route can be established.

5. TORA (TEMPORARY ORDERED ROUTING PROTOCOL) [26], [27]

TORA is a distributed highly adaptive routing protocol designed to operate in a dynamic multihop network. TORA uses an arbitrary height parameter to determine the direction of link between any two nodes for a given destination. Consequently, multiple routes often exist for a given destination but none of them are necessarily the shortest route. To initiate a route, the node broadcasts a QUERY packet to its neighbors. This QUERY is rebroadcasted through the network until it reaches the destination or an intermediate node that has a route to the destination. The recipient of the QUERY packet then broadcasts the UPDATE packet which lists its height with respect to the destination. When this packet propagates in the network, each node that receives the UPDATE packet sets its height to a value greater than the height of the neighbor from which the UPDATE was received. This has the effect of creating a series of directed links from the original sender of the QUERY packet to the node that initially generated the UPDATE packet. When it was discovered by a node that the route to a destination is no longer valid, it will adjust its height so that it will be a local maximum with respect to its neighbors and then transmits an UPDATE packet. If the node has no neighbors of finite height with respect to the destination, then the node will attempt to discover a new route as described above. When a node detects a network partition, it will generate a CLEAR packet that results in reset of routing over the ad hoc network. The flowchart [17] for TORA Protocol is given below:

5.1 Benefits and Limitations of TORA

One of the benefits of TORA is that the multiple routes between any source destination pair are supported by this protocol. Therefore, failure or removal of any of the nodes is quickly resolved without source intervention by switching to an alternate route.

TORA is also not free from limitations. One of them is that it depends on synchronized clocks among nodes in the ad hoc network. The dependence of this protocol on intermediate lower layers for certain functionality presumes that the link status sensing, neighbor discovery, in order packet delivery and address resolution are all

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readily available. The solution is to run the Internet MANET Encapsulation Protocol at the layer immediately below TORA. This will make the overhead for this protocol difficult to separate from that imposed by the lower layer.

5.2 3.0 Performance Metrics

There are number of qualitative and quantitative metrics that can be used to compare reactive routing protocols. Most of the existing routing protocols ensure the qualitative metrics. Therefore, the following different quantitative metrics have been considered to make the comparative study of these routing protocols through simulation.

1) **Routing overhead:** This metric describes how many routing packets for route discovery and route maintenance need to be sent so as to propagate the data packets.

2) **Average Delay:** This metric represents average end-to-end delay and indicates how long it took for a packet to travel from the source to the application layer of the destination. It is measured in seconds.

3) **Throughput:** This metric represents the total number of bits forwarded to higher layers per second. It is measured in bps. It can also be defined as the total amount of data a receiver actually receives from sender divided by the time taken by the receiver to obtain the last packet.

4) **Media Access Delay:** The time a node takes to access media for starting the packet transmission is called as media access delay. The delay is recorded for each packet when it is sent to the physical layer for the first time.

5) **Packet Delivery Ratio:** The ratio between the amount of incoming data packets and actually received data packets.

6) **Path optimality:** This metric can be defined as the difference between the path actually taken and the best possible path for a packet to reach its destination.

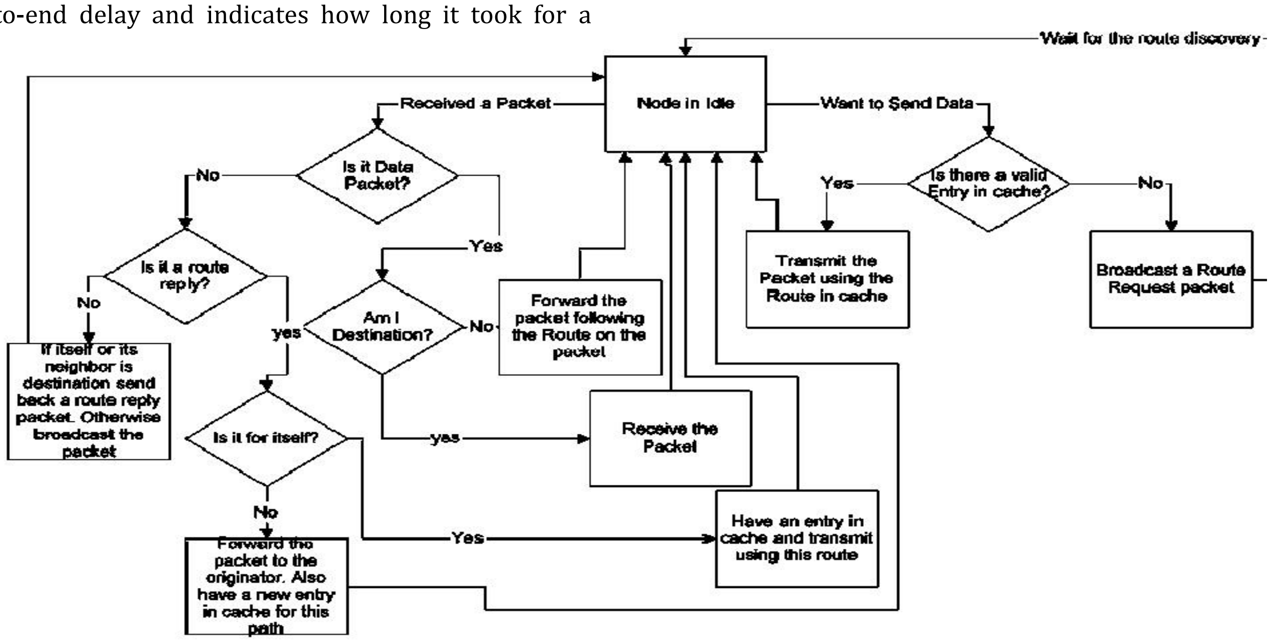

Fig. 4: Flow chart for DSR Working

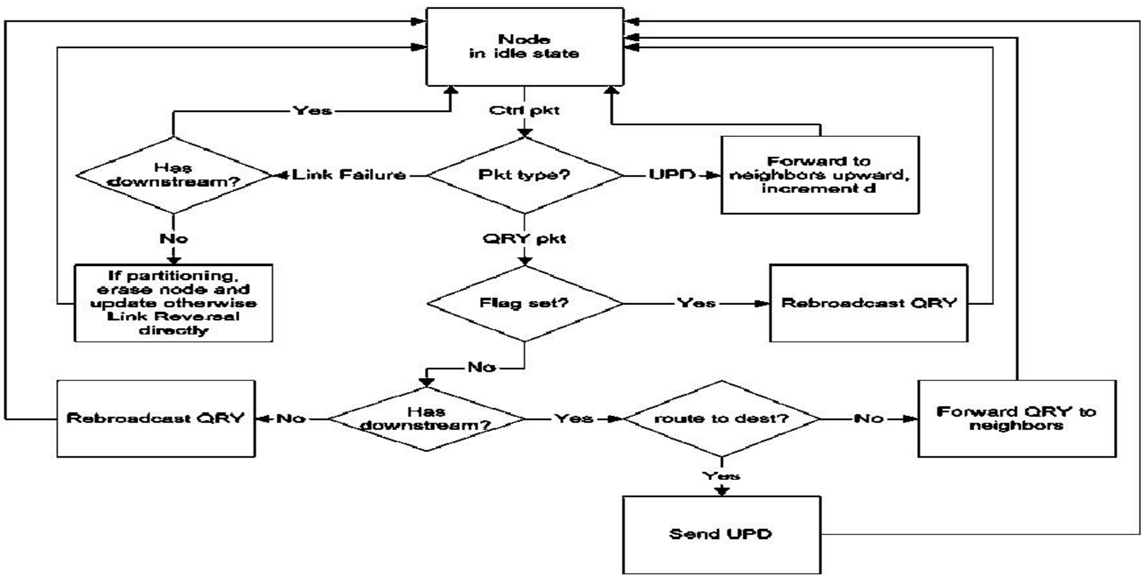

Fig. 5: Flow chart for TORA

TABLE I: Metrics W.R.T Low Mobility

LOW MOBILITY AND LOW TRAFFIC				
Protocol	**Routing Overhead**	**Average End To End Delay**	**Packet Delivery Ratio**	**Path Optimality**
DSR	Low	Average	High	Average
AODV	Low	Average	High	Average
TORA	Moderate	Low	High	Good

TABLE II: Metrics W.R.T. High Mobility

High Mobility and High Traffic				
Protocol	**Routing**	**Average end to end**	**Packet delivery**	**Path**
DSR	Average	Average	Average	Low
AODV	Very High	Average	Average	Average
TORA	High	More	Low	Average

TABLE III: Evaluation W.R.T Other Parameters

Protocol	Category	Protocol Type	Loop Freedom	Multiple routes	Multicast	Security	Message Overhead	Periodic broadcast	Requires sequence data	Expiry of routing information	Summary
DSR	On Demand or Reactive	Source Routing	Yes	Yes	No	No	High	No	No	No	Route Discovery, Snooping
AODV	On Demand or Reactive	Distance Vector	Yes	No	Yes	No	High	Possible	Yes	Yes	Route Discovery, Expanding Ring Search, Setting forward path
TORA	On Demand or Reactive	Link Reversal	No	No	No	No	Moderate	Possible	Yes	No	Route UPDATE packets

6. CONCLUSION

In this research paper, an effort has been made to concentrate on the comparative study and performance analysis of various on demand/reactive routing protocols (DSR, AODV and TORA) on the basis of above mentioned performance metrics. The results after analysis have reflected in Table I and Table II. The first table is description of parameters selected with respect to low mobility and lower traffic. It has been observed that the performance of all protocols studied was almost stable in sparse medium with low traffic. TORA performs much better in packet delivery owing to selection of better routes using acyclic graph. Table II is evaluation of same parameters with increasing speed and providing more nodes. The results indicate that AODV keeps on improving with denser mediums and at faster speeds.

Table III is description of other important parameters that make a protocol robust and steady in most cases. The evaluation predicts that in spite of slightly more overhead in some cases DSR and AODV outperforms TORA in all cases. AODV is still better in Route updation and maintenance process.

It has been further concluded that due to the dynamically changing topology and infrastructure less, decentralized characteristics, security and power awareness is hard to achieve in mobile ad hoc networks. Hence, security and power awareness mechanisms should be built-in features for all sorts of applications based on ad hoc network. The focus of the study is on these issues in our future research work and effort will be made to propose a solution for routing in Ad Hoc networks by tackling these core issues of secure and power aware/energy efficient routing.

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