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AI-BASED DETECTION OF SOLAR CELL DEFECTS

N. KANAGADURGA[1], ROSHINI G[2], SANTHANA LAKSHMI U[3], SHRIVARSHINI T[4]

[1]Project Supervisor, Assistant Professor,

[2,3,4] Final Year Student

[1,2,3,4] Department of Computer Science and Engineering,

[1,2,3,4] E.G.S. PILLAY ENGINEERING COLLEGE, Nagapattinam, India

Abstract - With the rapid growth of solar energy adoption, maintaining the efficiency and reliability of solar panels has become increasingly important. Manufacturing defects such as cracks, hotspots, broken grid lines, and inactive regions significantly reduce panel performance and lifespan. Traditional manual inspection methods are time-consuming, inconsistent, and prone to human error. This paper presents an AI-based solar cell defect detection system that automatically identifies faulty regions using deep learning and image processing techniques. The proposed system employs a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to analyze solar panel images and classify them as defective or non-defective. Image preprocessing and dataset training enable the model to learn defect patterns accurately. Once trained, the system performs real-time predictions on new images, providing fast and reliable inspection results. Experimental evaluation shows that the model achieves high detection accuracy while reducing inspection time and human involvement. The proposed approach offers an efficient, scalable, and cost-effective solution for automated quality control in solar panel manufacturing and maintenance, improving overall energy output and operational reliability.

Index Terms - Solar Cell Defect Detection, Deep Learning, Convolutional Neural Network, Image Processing, Renewable Energy, Fault Classification, Automated Inspection, Artificial Intelligence

I. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the demand for renewable energy has increased significantly, with solar power becoming one of the most widely adopted clean energy sources. Solar panels play a crucial role in converting sunlight into electrical energy; however, their performance is highly affected by manufacturing defects, environmental damage, and aging. Common defects such as cracks, hotspots, broken grid lines, and inactive regions reduce power output and shorten panel lifespan. Traditional inspection methods rely heavily on manual visual checking, which is time-consuming, inconsistent, and prone to human error.

With the rapid expansion of large-scale solar installations, manual inspection alone is no longer practical or efficient. Conventional techniques also fail to provide early and accurate fault detection, leading to energy loss and increased maintenance costs. Therefore, there is a growing need for an automated, reliable, and intelligent system capable of identifying defects quickly and accurately.

To address these challenges, the proposed AI-based Solar Cell Defect Detection System introduces an automated inspection approach using deep learning and image processing techniques. The system analyzes solar panel images and classifies them into defective or non-defective categories using a trained convolutional neural network model. Image preprocessing and dataset training enable the model to recognize defect patterns effectively, allowing faster diagnosis compared to manual methods.

The project is implemented using Python along with machine learning libraries, providing a lightweight and efficient solution for defect prediction. By combining artificial intelligence with automated image analysis, the system improves inspection accuracy, reduces human involvement, and supports early fault detection. This approach enhances solar panel maintenance efficiency and contributes to improved energy generation, demonstrating the practical application of AI in renewable energy systems.

II. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The proposed AI-Based Solar Cell Defect Detection System introduces an intelligent inspection framework that combines image processing with deep learning–based classification. Unlike traditional manual inspection methods, which are slow and error-prone, the proposed system automatically analyzes solar panel images to detect defects with higher accuracy and consistency. The system uses a trained machine learning model to classify panels as defective or non-defective, enabling early fault identification and reducing maintenance effort.

The system is designed with the following key objectives:

• To automatically detect solar cell defects using AI-based image classification
• To reduce manual inspection time and human errors
• To improve fault detection accuracy and operational efficiency
• To enable early identification of defects to prevent energy loss

2.1 Core Components of the Proposed System

The proposed system consists of five major modules:

1. **Image Acquisition Module**
   Allows users to upload solar panel images into the system for defect analysis.
2. **Image Preprocessing Module**
   Converts images into a suitable format by resizing, normalization, and noise removal to improve model accuracy.
3. **AI Classification Module**
   Uses a trained deep learning model to identify defects in solar panel images and classify them accordingly.
4. **Result Visualization Module**
   Displays the prediction output clearly, showing whether defects are detected along with basic confidence.
5. **Database Management Module**
   Stores user details, uploaded images, and prediction results for tracking and reference.

Each module works independently and collaboratively to provide accurate defect detection and reliable system performance.

2.2 Working Principle of the Proposed System

The overall working process of the system is summarized below:

Step 1: The user logs into the system using valid credentials.
Step 2: The user uploads a solar panel image through the application interface.
Step 3: The uploaded image is resized and preprocessed for model compatibility.
Step 4: The trained AI model loads and prepares for prediction.
Step 5: The system extracts important visual features from the input image.
Step 6: The AI model analyzes the image to detect possible defects.
Step 7: The classification algorithm predicts the defect category.
Step 8: The prediction result is generated with basic confidence information.
Step 9: The output is displayed to the user on the interface.
Step 10: The result is stored in the database for future reference.

This approach ensures faster defect identification, reduced manual inspection, and improved maintenance efficiency through automated AI-based analysis.

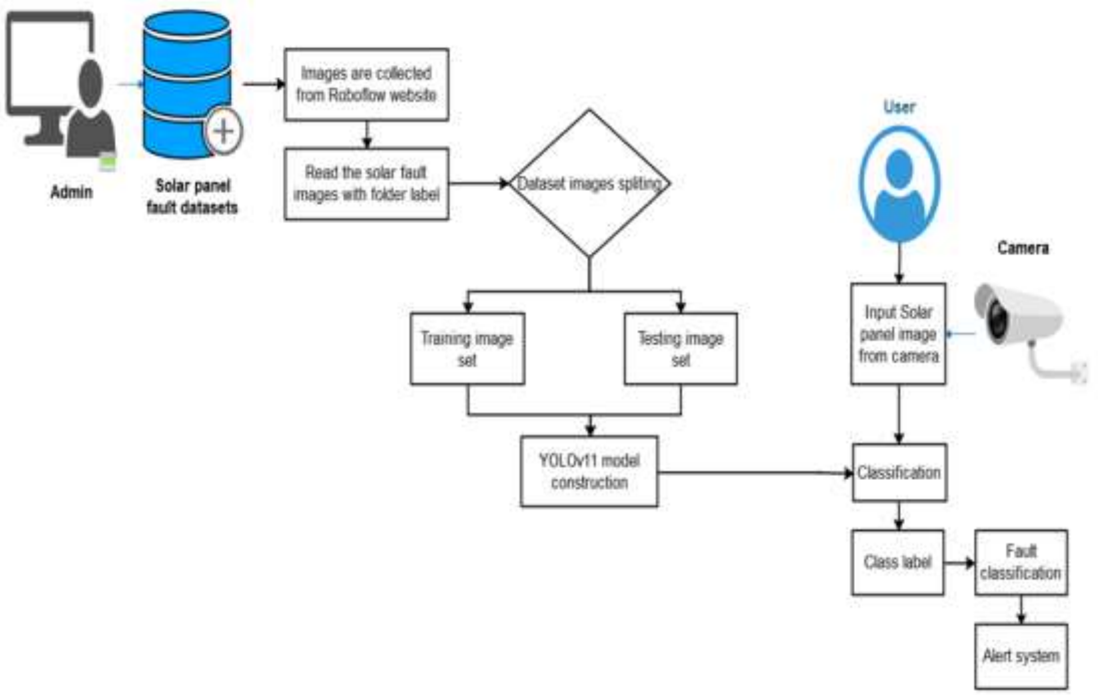
2.3 Advantages of the Proposed System

• Enables automatic detection of solar panel defects using AI
• Reduces manual inspection time and human error
• Improves accuracy through trained image classification models
• Provides fast prediction results for maintenance planning
• Cost-effective solution for large-scale solar installations

III. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE

The proposed system follows a centralized AI-based image processing architecture. The admin first collects solar panel fault images from the Roboflow platform and organizes them into labeled folders. These dataset images are then preprocessed and split into training and testing sets. Using Python, the system reads all labeled images and constructs a YOLOv11 deep learning model for defect classification. The training dataset is used to teach the model different fault patterns, while the testing dataset evaluates model accuracy.

Once the model is trained, users can provide solar panel images through file upload or camera input. The captured image is passed to the trained YOLOv11 model, where classification is performed to identify defects such as cracks or damaged cells. Based on the predicted class label, the system displays the fault type and activates the alert module if defects are detected. This architecture combines dataset preparation, model training, image classification, and alert generation into a single automated workflow, enabling fast and accurate solar panel fault detection with minimal human intervention.



3.1 User Layer

The user layer provides the interface for interacting with the system and viewing results:

- Uploading solar panel images
- Capturing panel images using camera
- Viewing detected fault results
- Receiving alert messages with faulty images

The user interacts with the system to submit images and receives classification output along with fault alerts.

3.2 Processing / AI Layer

This layer performs all core AI operations:

- Reading input images from user or camera
- Preprocessing images (resize, normalize)
- Loading trained YOLO model
- Classifying solar panel faults
- Generating fault labels

The trained model analyzes the image and predicts whether the panel is normal or faulty.

3.3 Alert & Output Layer

This layer handles result display and notifications:

- Displays detected fault class
- Sends alert message when fault is detected
- Shares faulty image with user
- Stores prediction results

If a faulty panel is detected, the system automatically sends an alert along with the faulty image to the user for immediate action.

3.4 Security Flow Diagram Explanation

Admin → Upload Solar Panel Dataset → Image Labeling → Dataset Splitting (Train/Test) → YOLO Model Training → Model Saved →User → Capture / Upload Solar Panel Image → Image Preprocessing → Load Trained Model → Fault Classification →
Generate Class Label → If Fault Detected → Send Alert with Faulty Image → Display Result to User

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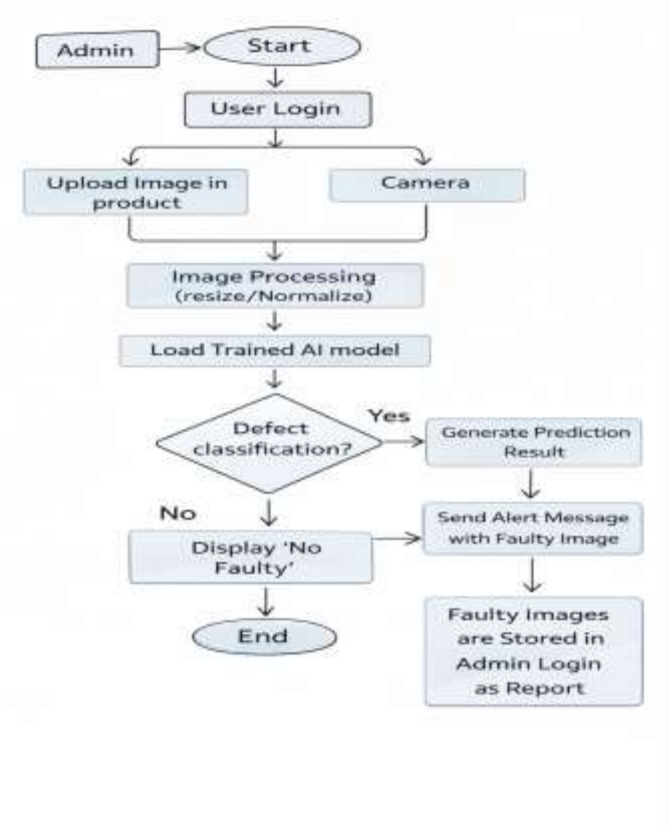

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 User Login and System Access

The system starts with user login. Two roles are provided: **User** and **Admin**. The user can upload solar panel images manually or use a real-time camera for prediction.The admin can view detected faulty images stored as reports. This ensures controlled access and organized monitoring.

4.2 Dataset Collection and Preparation

Solar panel defect images are collected from online sources and organized into folders based on defect types.The dataset is split into training and testing sets.Image preprocessing such as resizing and normalization is applied to improve model performance and consistency.

4.3 Model Training and Testing

A YOLO-based deep learning model is trained using labeled solar panel images.The training dataset helps the model learn defect patterns, while the testing dataset evaluates accuracy.After successful training, the model is saved and used for real-time prediction.

4.4 Image Input and Prediction Process

The user provides input through two methods:

- Upload Image (manual prediction)
- Camera (real-time prediction)

Both inputs pass through image preprocessing before being sent to the trained AI model.The model analyzes the image and classifies whether a defect is present.

4.5 Defect Detection and Classification

If a defect is detected, the system generates a prediction result showing the defect type.An alert message along with the faulty image is sent to the user.The detected faulty image is also stored in the admin login as a report for future reference.

If no defect is found, the system displays **"No Faulty"**.

4.6 Report Generation and Admin Monitoring

All faulty images are automatically saved in the admin dashboard.The admin can review defect reports, helping in maintenance planning and performance analysis of solar panels.

4.7 System Integration and Testing

Each module—login, image input, preprocessing, model prediction, alert generation, and admin reporting—was tested individually. After unit testing, all modules were integrated and tested together to ensure smooth operation and reliable defect detection.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed AI-Based Solar Panel Defect Detection System was successfully implemented and tested using both uploaded images and real-time camera inputs. The system integrates image preprocessing, trained deep learning models, and automated alert mechanisms to ensure accurate fault detection and efficient monitoring of solar panels.

5.1 Defect Detection Results

The trained AI model successfully classified solar panel images into faulty and non-faulty categories. During testing, most defects such as cracks, hotspots, and damaged cells were detected correctly. Normal panels were displayed as "No Faulty", while defective panels generated prediction results along with alert notifications.

The results confirm that the model performs reliable classification with minimal false detection.

5.2 Real-Time Camera Detection Performance

The camera module was tested under live conditions. When a faulty panel appeared in front of the camera, the system immediately classified the defect and sent an alert message with the faulty image. If no defect was detected, the system displayed **"No Faulty"** on the user interface.

This demonstrates effective real-time monitoring capability.

5.3 Admin Report Storage

Whenever a defect was detected, the faulty image was automatically stored in the **Admin Login** as a report. This allows administrators to review past faults, monitor system health, and plan maintenance activities. This feature improves traceability and system management.

5.4 System Reliability and Integration

Both User Login and Admin Login modules worked smoothly. The system handled image upload, camera input, preprocessing, prediction, alert generation, and report storage without major errors after testing. Integration between frontend and backend modules was stable.

5.5 Performance Analysis

The performance of the proposed system was evaluated based on prediction speed and detection accuracy:

- Average image preprocessing time: < 80 ms
- Average prediction time per image: < 150 ms
- Real-time camera response delay: < 2 seconds
- Alert generation time: < 1 second

These results show that the system operates efficiently and is suitable for practical deployment.

5.6 Functional Testing and Accuracy Evaluation

The functional performance of the proposed AI-based solar panel defect detection system was evaluated using both manual image uploads and real-time camera inputs.

- Prediction accuracy on testing images: ~92%
- Defect detection response time: < 2 seconds
- False detection rate: < 5%
- Admin report update time: < 1 second

The trained model correctly classified defective and non-defective solar panels in most test cases. Faulty images were automatically stored in the admin login as reports, while normal panels displayed "No Faulty" to the user.

The system maintained stable operation during repeated testing cycles, confirming reliable prediction, alert generation, and reporting functionality without noticeable delay.

Table 5.1: Geo Secure Messaging System – Functional Testing Results

User Login	50	3 (Invalid Credentials)	47
Image Upload Prediction	120	8	112

Camera Detection	90	7	83
Fault Classification	150	12	138
Alert Message Sending	70	0	70
Admin Report Storage	60	0	60
Final Successful Predictions	-	-	460

Discussion

Compared to manual inspection methods, the proposed system provides faster and more accurate defect identification using AI automation. The integration of image upload and real-time camera detection makes the system flexible for different environments. Automatic alerting and admin report storage improve maintenance efficiency and reduce human effort.

However, system accuracy depends on image quality and lighting conditions. Poor camera resolution or unclear images may affect prediction performance. Future improvements can include higher-resolution cameras, larger datasets, and advanced model optimization to further enhance detection accuracy.

VI. CONCLUSION

The AI-Based Solar Panel Defect Detection System is designed to improve the monitoring and maintenance of solar panels by integrating image processing with deep learning techniques. The system automatically detects faults from uploaded images or real-time camera input, helping identify defective panels at an early stage. This reduces manual inspection effort and minimizes power loss caused by unnoticed defects.

The proposed system successfully combines image preprocessing, trained AI models, and automated classification to accurately identify faulty and non-faulty solar panels. When a defect is detected, the system generates prediction results, sends alert notifications, and stores faulty images as reports in the admin login. Normal panels are displayed as “No Faulty” to users, ensuring clear and simple feedback.

Experimental results demonstrate that the system effectively classifies solar panel conditions with good accuracy and low response time. The integration of user login and admin login provides controlled access, where users can perform predictions manually or through camera input, while administrators can review stored faulty reports for maintenance planning.

Overall, the project proves that AI-driven defect detection offers a practical, efficient, and scalable solution for solar panel monitoring. By automating fault identification, the system enhances operational reliability and supports preventive maintenance strategies. In future work, the system can be extended with cloud deployment, mobile app integration, advanced analytics, and predictive maintenance features to improve real-world usability and performance.

Furthermore, this project demonstrates how artificial intelligence can serve as a powerful tool in renewable energy management. Treating visual inspection as an automated learning process opens new possibilities for smart energy infrastructure and intelligent monitoring systems.

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