IJIREEICE
ISSN (O) 2321-2004, ISSN (P) 2321-5526
International Journal of Innovative Research in Electrical, Electronics, Instrumentation and Control Engineering
Impact Factor 8.414 ※ Peer-reviewed & Refereed journal ※ Vol. 14, Issue 5, May 2026
DOI: 10.17148/IJIREEICE.2026.14515

SOLAR BASED RAILWAY TRACK FAULT DETECTION SYSTEM

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I.ABSTRACT

The Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System is designed to improve railway safety by detecting faults such as cracks, obstacles, and abnormal vibrations on railway tracks. The system uses solar energy as its primary power source, making it eco-friendly and suitable for remote areas. An Arduino-based control unit integrates sensors like IR sensors, ultrasonic sensors, and vibration sensors to monitor track conditions in real time. When a fault is detected, the system stops the motorized unit and sends alerts using GSM and GPS modules. This ensures early detection, reduces accidents, and improves railway safety.

Keywords: Solar Energy, Railway Track Fault Detection, Arduino UNO, Embedded System, Real-Time Monitoring, GSM & GPS Communication.

II. INTRODUCTION

Railway transportation is one of the most widely used and economical modes of transport for both passengers and goods. Despite its advantages, ensuring safety in railway operations remains a critical challenge, primarily due to track-related failures such as cracks, misalignment, loose joints, and unexpected obstacles. These faults can lead to serious accidents, including derailments, resulting in significant loss of life and property. Traditionally, railway track inspection is carried out manually, which is not only time-consuming and labour-intensive but also prone to human errors. Moreover, manual methods fail to provide continuous and real-time monitoring of track conditions, especially in remote and inaccessible areas.

In recent years, advancements in embedded systems and sensor technologies have enabled the development of automated fault detection systems that can significantly enhance railway safety. However, many of these systems depend on a continuous power supply, which is often unavailable in rural or isolated regions. To address this limitation, the integration of renewable energy sources, particularly solar energy, offers a sustainable and reliable solution for uninterrupted system operation.

The proposed Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System utilizes an Arduino-based embedded platform integrated with multiple sensors to monitor track conditions in real time. IR sensors are employed for detecting track cracks, ultrasonic sensors are used for identifying obstacles, and vibration sensors help in monitoring abnormal track behaviour. The system is further enhanced with GSM and GPS modules, which enable real-time communication by sending alert messages along with precise location details to railway authorities when a fault is detected.

Additionally, the system is designed to automatically stop the movement of the inspection unit upon fault detection, thereby preventing potential accidents. By reducing reliance on manual inspection and incorporating real-time monitoring and communication, the proposed system improves efficiency, reliability, and safety in railway operations. Thus, this approach provides a smart, eco-friendly, and cost-effective solution for modern railway track monitoring and accident prevention.

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III. LITERATURE SURVEY

Railway track fault detection has evolved from manual inspection methods to automated sensor-based systems. Traditional manual inspection is time-consuming, labour-intensive, and prone to human error, making it unsuitable for continuous monitoring.

To improve efficiency, IR sensor-based systems were introduced for crack detection, while ultrasonic sensors were used for obstacle detection. Vibration sensors have also been applied to monitor abnormal track conditions. However, these systems often focus on a single type of fault and lack comprehensive monitoring.

With advancements in embedded systems, Arduino-based solutions integrating multiple sensors have been developed. Additionally, GSM and GPS technologies have enabled real-time fault detection and location tracking. Recent IoT-based systems provide remote monitoring capabilities but depend on continuous power supply and internet connectivity.

To overcome these limitations, solar-powered systems have been proposed for sustainable operation. The proposed system integrates multiple sensors with GSM, GPS, and solar energy, providing a reliable, real-time, and eco-friendly solution for railway track monitoring and safety.

IV. PROPOSED WORK

The proposed system presents a Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System designed for real-time monitoring and improved railway safety. The system is powered by a solar panel with a rechargeable battery, ensuring continuous operation in remote areas without external power supply an Arduino UNO microcontroller acts as the central unit, integrating multiple sensors for fault detection. IR sensors are used to detect track cracks, an ultrasonic sensor identifies obstacles, and a vibration sensor monitors abnormal track conditions.

When a fault is detected, the system automatically stops the unit and activates a buzzer for local alert. Additionally, a GSM module sends an alert message, while a GPS module provides the exact location of the fault to railway authorities.

The proposed system offers a cost-effective, eco-friendly, and reliable solution by combining solar energy, multi-sensor detection, and real-time communication for efficient railway track monitoring.

V. BLOCK DIAGRAM

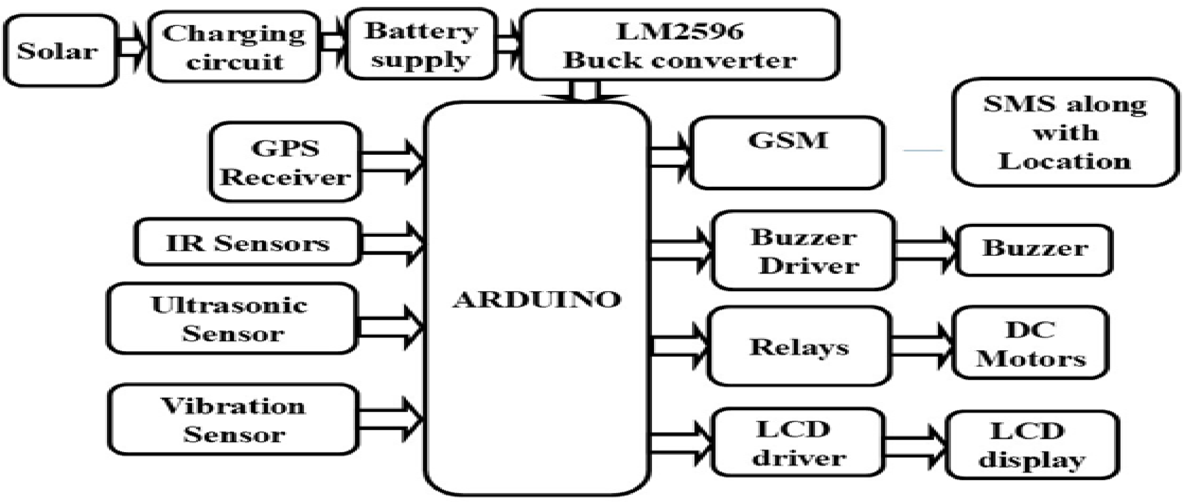

Fig. 1. Block Diagram

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The block diagram of the Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System illustrates the overall architecture and interaction between various components. The system is powered by a solar panel, which converts solar energy into electrical energy and stores it in a rechargeable battery through a charging circuit. The Arduino UNO microcontroller acts as the central control unit, receiving input signals from multiple sensors, including IR sensors for crack detection, an ultrasonic sensor for obstacle detection, and a vibration sensor for monitoring abnormal track conditions. Based on the sensor data, the controller processes and identifies faults in real time. For communication, a GSM module is used to send alert messages, while a GPS module provides the exact location of the detected fault. Output devices such as a buzzer and LCD display are included to provide immediate alerts and system status. All these components work together to ensure continuous monitoring, timely fault detection, and efficient communication for enhanced railway safety.

VI. CIRCUIT DIAGRAM

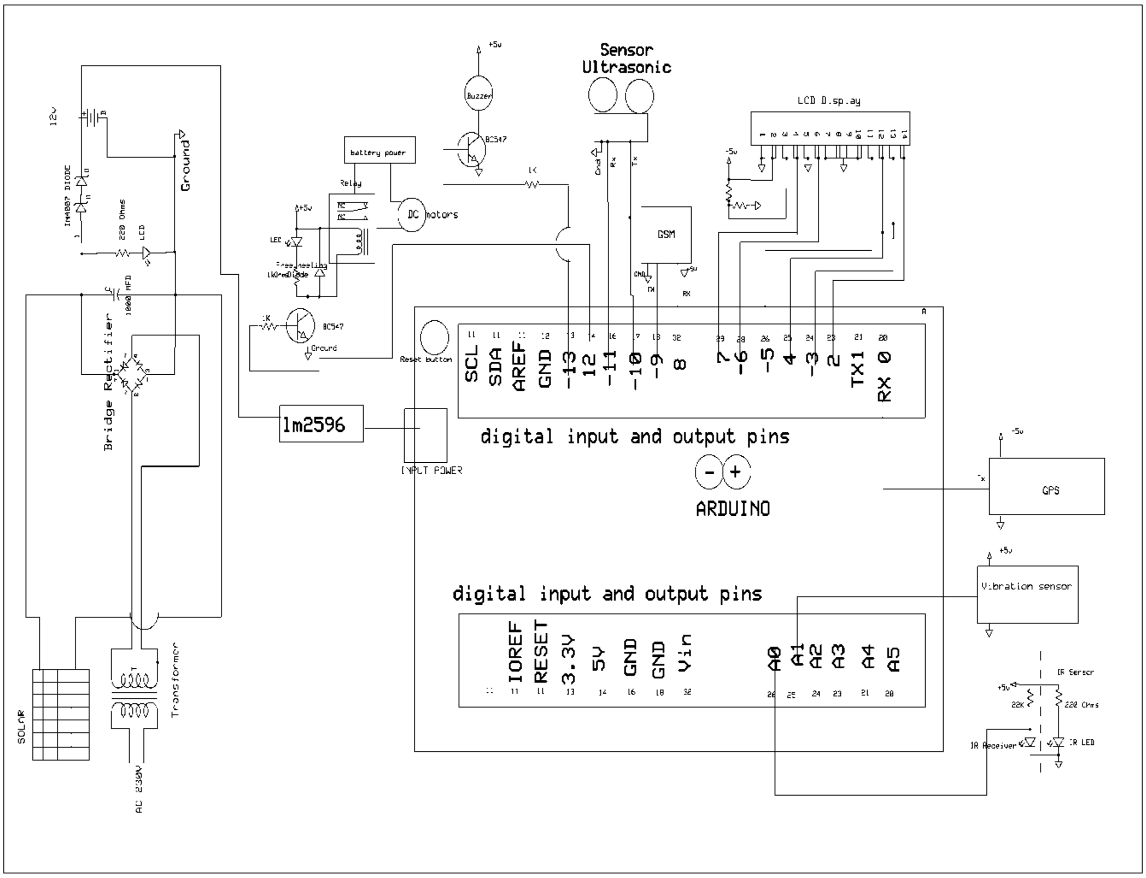

Fig . 2. Circuit diagram

VII. HARDWARE COMPONENTS

- Arduino UNO: The Arduino Uno is a microcontroller board which has ATmega328 from the AVR family. There are 14 digital input/output pins, 6 Analog pins and 16MHz ceramic resonator. USB connection, power jack and also a reset button is used. Its software is supported by a number of libraries that makes the programming easier

Fig. Fig 3. Arduino UNO

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Battery: A rechargeable battery, storage battery, or accumulator is a type of electrical battery. It comprises one or more electrochemical cells, and is a type of energy accumulator. It is known as a secondary cell because its electrochemical reactions are electrically reversible. Rechargeable batteries come in many different shapes and sizes, ranging from button cells to megawatt systems connected to stabilize an electrical distribution network. Several different combinations of chemicals are commonly used, including: lead–acid, nickel cadmium (NiCd), nickel metal hydride (NiMH), lithium ion (Li-ion), and lithium ion polymer (Li-ion polymer).

Fig. 4. Battery

Ultrasonic Sensor: The ultrasonic sensor is used to detect obstacles on the railway track by measuring the distance between the sensor and any object using ultrasonic waves. It emits high-frequency sound pulses and calculates the time taken for the echo to return after reflection from an object. Based on this time-of-flight principle, the distance is determined and any obstruction is identified. The sensor sends this information to the microcontroller for real-time processing and fault detection.

Fig. 5. Ultrasonic Sensor

Light Emitting diode : In the proposed system, the LED acts as a visual indicator that turns ON when a fault such as a track crack, obstacle, or abnormal vibration is detected. It provides immediate status feedback of the system, enabling quick identification of fault conditions.

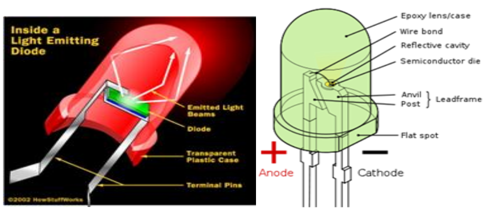

Fig. 6. LED

GPS Antenna: The GPS antenna receives satellite signals and enables the GPS module to determine the precise location (latitude and longitude) of the detected fault. This location data is transmitted to authorities through the communication module for quick response and maintenance.

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Fig. 7. Neo 6 AGPS Reciever

DC Motor :The DC motor is used to drive the movement of the inspection unit along the railway track for continuous monitoring. It is controlled by the microcontroller and automatically stops when a fault is detected to prevent further motion.

Fig. 8. DC Motor

Buzzer: The buzzer acts as an audible alert device that is activated when a fault is detected in the railway track. It provides immediate sound indication to notify nearby personnel about the detected issue. Additionally, it helps in quick identification of fault conditions during system operation. The buzzer works in coordination with the microcontroller and other alert systems to enhance overall safety and response time.

Fig. 9. Buzzer

GSM Module : The GSM module enables wireless communication by sending alert messages when a fault is detected in the railway track. It transmits fault information along with GPS location details to railway authorities for immediate action. Additionally, it ensures real-time communication over long distances without the need for internet connectivity. The module operates under the control of the microcontroller, improving the system's responsiveness and reliability.

Fig. 10.GSM module

IR Obstacle sensor: The IR obstacle sensor is used to detect the presence of cracks or discontinuities in the railway track. It works by emitting infrared rays and detecting the reflected signal from the track surface. When a fault or gap is present,

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the reflected signal changes, indicating a defect. The sensor sends this information to the microcontroller for further processing and fault detection.

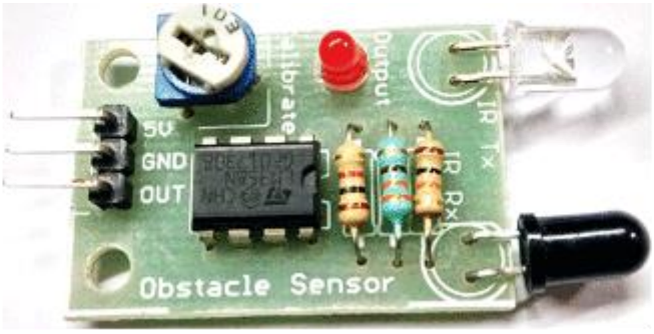

Fig. 11.:IR obstacle sensor

DC-DC converter :The DC-DC converter is used to regulate and step down the voltage from the battery to a stable level required by the system It ensures a constant and efficient power supply to the microcontroller, sensors, and communication modules. Additionally, it improves energy efficiency by minimizing power losses during voltage conversion. The converter plays a vital role in maintaining reliable operation of the system under varying power conditions.

Fig 12 :LM2596 DC -DC Converter

Solar panel :The solar panel converts sunlight into electrical energy to power the entire system. The generated energy is stored in a rechargeable battery for continuous operation. It ensures an eco-friendly and sustainable power source, especially in remote areas. The solar panel enables uninterrupted monitoring without dependence on external power supply.

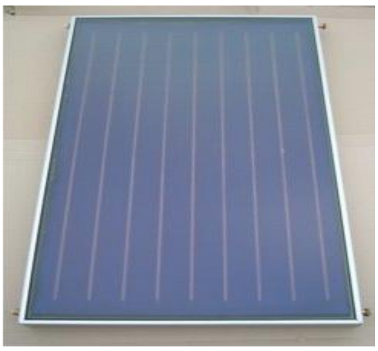

Fig 13 :solar panel

Relay :The relay acts as an electrically controlled switch used to control high-power devices in the system. It is activated by the microcontroller when a fault is detected to disconnect or control the motor circuit. This helps in stopping the system automatically to prevent accidents. The relay ensures safe and reliable switching operation.

Vibrator sensor : The vibration sensor is used to detect abnormal vibrations or disturbances in the railway track. It senses changes in vibration levels and sends signals to the microcontroller for analysis. When unusual vibrations are detected, it indicates possible track faults or structural issues. This helps in early detection and prevention of potential failures.

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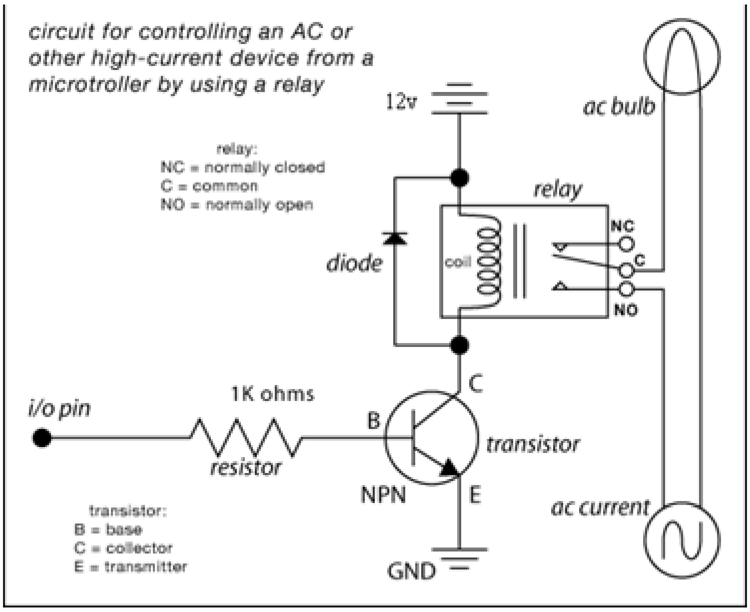

Fig 14:Relay

Fig 15 :Vibrator Sensor

VIII. WORKING

The Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System operates by integrating solar power, sensors, and communication modules for real-time monitoring. The solar panel generates electrical energy, which is stored in a rechargeable battery and supplied to all system components through a DC-DC converter. The Arduino UNO acts as the central controller, continuously receiving input from sensors such as IR sensors for crack detection, an ultrasonic sensor for obstacle detection, and a vibration sensor for monitoring abnormal track conditions. During operation, the inspection unit moves along the railway track using a DC motor. If any fault such as a crack, obstacle, or abnormal vibration is detected, the sensor sends a signal to the microcontroller. The controller immediately stops the motor using a relay, activates a buzzer and LED for local alerts, and displays the status on an LCD. Simultaneously, the GPS module determines the exact location of the fault, and the GSM module sends an alert message with location details to the concerned authorities. Thus, the system ensures continuous monitoring, early fault detection, and quick response to prevent railway accidents.

IX. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System involves the integration of hardware and software components into a compact inspection unit. The hardware setup includes a solar panel, rechargeable battery, DC-DC converter, Arduino UNO microcontroller, sensors (IR, ultrasonic, and vibration), GSM and GPS modules, relay, buzzer, LED, and DC motor. All components are interconnected according to the designed circuit, with the Arduino acting as the central control unit. The system is programmed using embedded C in the Arduino IDE to continuously read sensor data, process fault conditions, and control output devices. The GSM and GPS modules are configured for real-time communication and location tracking. The entire setup is mounted on a movable platform that travels along the railway track for inspection. The system is tested under different conditions to verify accurate fault detection, reliable communication, and efficient power management using solar energy.

X. RESULT

The implemented Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System successfully detects various track faults, including cracks, obstacles, and abnormal vibrations, with reliable accuracy. The system responds promptly by stopping the motor,

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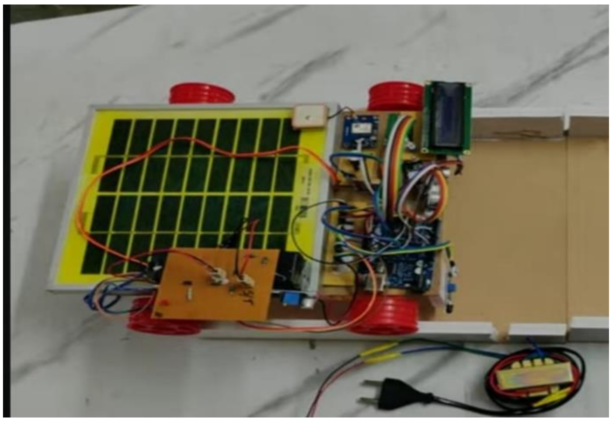
activating visual and audible alerts, and displaying the fault status on the LCD. Additionally, the GSM module effectively sends alert messages along with GPS-based location details to the concerned authorities in real time. The use of solar energy ensures uninterrupted operation, making the system suitable for remote areas. Overall, the results demonstrate that the proposed system is efficient, reliable, and capable of enhancing railway safety through early fault detection and timely communication.



XI. CONCLUSION

The developed Solar-Based Railway Track Fault Detection System was tested under various simulated conditions to evaluate its performance and reliability. The system effectively detected track faults such as cracks, obstacles, and abnormal vibrations with good accuracy. Upon detection, the microcontroller successfully triggered the control actions, including stopping the DC motor, activating the buzzer and LED indicators, and displaying the fault status on the LCD.

The GSM module reliably transmitted alert messages along with GPS-based location details to the designated receiver, ensuring real-time communication. The GPS module provided accurate positioning of the detected faults, enabling quick identification and response. Furthermore, the solar power system maintained continuous operation by efficiently charging the battery and supplying power to all components.

The overall system demonstrated stable performance, low power consumption, and effective integration of sensing, control, and communication modules. These results confirm that the proposed system is capable of providing a reliable, eco-friendly, and efficient solution for real-time railway track monitoring and fault detection.

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