International Research Journal of Engineering and Technology (IRJET) e-ISSN: 2395-0056
Volume: 12 Issue: 11 | Nov 2025 www.irjet.net p-ISSN: 2395-0072

Solar Energy Optimization Using MPPT and AI-Based Prediction

Mrs. Kalpana S[1], Ajay Kumar S[2], Divya M[3], Karthik G.D[4], Usha T[5].

[1] *Assistant Professor Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering*
PES Institute of Technology and Management, Shivamogga, Karnataka, India
[2,3,4,5] *BE Final Year Students, Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering*
PES Institute of Technology and Management, Shivamogga, Karnataka, India

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Abstract - *Unpredictable changes in weather conditions and poorly designed solar power system control mechanisms typically lead to under-performance in solar photovoltaic systems. The research presented here goes one step further in developing a more integrated approach to optimizing solar energy systems which focuses on the combination of real-time photovoltaic systems Maximum Power Point Tracking, comprehensive IoT (Internet of Things) monitoring, and artificial intelligence (AI) forecasting. The system designed for this purpose incorporates an Arduino Mega 2560 microcontroller that runs a Perturb and Observe (P And O) power optimizing algorithm and a Raspberry Pi that serves as the intelligent data gateway for sensor data. The Raspberry Pi also connects to the NASA POWER API to download weather data and provides access to a cloud dashboard for users. The testing conducted demonstrated a 15 25%improvement on energy capture compared to standard solar systems. The monitored system provides users engagement on the maintenance of the system. This work provides a comprehensive solution for the gap between traditional solar systems to a forward intelligent energy management system. This approach is economically feasible for distributed photovoltaic systems.*

Key Words: **Solar photovoltaic systems, Maximum Power Point Tracking, Perturb and Observe algorithm, Internet of Things, Arduino microcontroller, Raspberry Pi, cloud monitoring, buck-boost converter.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Advances in the adoption of sustainable energy technologies make solar photovoltaics a core component of any modern renewable energy system. Yet, there are considerable challenges to the variability of these systems and their sensitivity to changing environmental conditions. A solar panel's performance is influenced to a considerable degree, if not the most, by non-linear, voltage-current characteristics which change continuously with the intensity of solar radiation, ambient temperature, and partial shading. These complex conditions can lead to a significant loss in the amount of energy that is extracted under conventional methods that use fixed parameters. Passive mode operation is the default for most solar installations. These systems convert the solar energy that is available and do not take dynamic optimization steps. This passive approach is responsible for significant energy losses in these solar installations. Appropriate maximum power point tracking technology implementation in these systems could provide energy capture improvements of 15-30%. Finally, the lack of real-time system monitoring and remote access restricts maintainability and user engagement, which in turn results in extended periods of undetected performance loss. Managing solar energy today requires the use of smart systems which can determine on the fly optimal configurations and predictive analytics that help maximize energy capture and Software and Communication Infrastructure: lower operational costs. The use of IoT devices and advanced control automation provides new and powerful means of delivering solar energy systems automation which self-adjust to prevailing weather changes and provide users with complete operational feedback. This research addresses the identified cutting-edge gaps with the introduction of a novel dual-controller system design that combines hardware-based MPPT optimization with IoT enabled extensive monitoring and cloud control. The system leverages the real-time power of the Arduino Mega 2560 for responsive power optimization and employs the processing power, connectivity, and control of the Raspberry Pi for intelligent system data, external API integration, and user interface design.

2. SYSTEM ARCHITECTURE AND DESIGN

A. Overall System Configuration

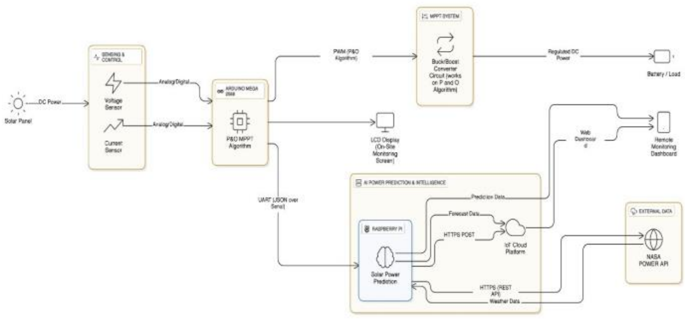

Fig. 1. System Architecture of the solar energy optimization system.

The solar energy optimization system proposed includes a creatively designed two-controller construction which is specifically designed for optimizing real-time performance capabilities and smart data management. The system architecture consists of several communicating subsystems acting in an or chest rated manner to harvest maximum energy while providing complete monitoring and user interface functionalities. The system block diagram illustrates the complete integration of all the system components. The solar panel produces DC power while the voltage and current sensors monitor the performance at all times. The control of the buck-boost converter with PWM signals for power-extraction purposes is implemented by the Arduino Mega 2560 through executing the P&O MPPT algorithm. At the same time, the Raspberry Pi gathers data from the sensors, retrieves further weather data from the NASA POWER API, and manages cloud communication to the dashboard for monitoring purposes.

Primary Hardware Components:

- Solar photovoltaic panel (50W monocrystalline silicon)
- Current sensor (ACS712-30A) and voltage sensor (25V divider module)
- Arduino Mega 2560 microcontroller platform
- Buck-boost converter with PWM control interface
- Raspberry Pi 4 single-board computer
- Lithium-ion battery storage system with charge management
- P&O MPPT algorithm implementation (Arduino embedded C)
- Data acquisition and processing system (Python on Rasp berry Pi)
- NASA POWER API integration for meteorological data
- Web-based dashboard with MQTT/HTTPS communication protocols
- AI prediction framework (future implementation)
- Real-time monitoring and visualization interface

B. Hardware Architecture Design

The system's hardware architecture centers on the innovative dual-controller methodology, where the Arduino Mega 2560 handles time-critical MPPT operations while the Rasp berry Pi manages computationally intensive IoT functions and potential AI processing tasks. This architectural approach ensures optimal performance for both real-time control requirements and comprehensive data management needs.

Solar Panel and Sensing Infrastructure: The hardware architecture for the system centers on a dual-controller approach, with the time-critical MPPT functions managed by an Arduino Mega 2560 and computationally intensive IoT functions, such as accounting and AI processing (if applicable), managed by the Raspberry Pi. This architecture provides the best performance for real-time control and data management.

MPPT Controller Implementation (Arduino Mega 2560): The photovoltaic panel is the main energy source pro ducing power that varies dynamically in response to environ mental conditions (i.e., solar irradiance, ambient temperature, atmospheric clarity). Precision voltage and current sensors provide continuous real-time telemetry to the MPPT controller, which uses this data to compute accurate power values and make optimization decisions with minimal uncertainty due to measurement.

Power Conditioning System: The buck-boost converter topology, maintained by well-controlled PWM signals provided by the Arduino, allows maximum power to be transferred to the storage battery or load-connected systems while providing excellent efficiency. This converter topology also enables a broad input range of voltage fluctuations while maintaining excellent energy extraction efficiency.

C. IoT and AI-Ready Communication Architecture

Data Aggregation and Processing (Raspberry Pi): The Raspberry Pi will gather the sensor data generated by the Arduino using UART communication, processing the data with advanced algorithms and analyzing the external meteorological data pulled from the NASA POWER API. This provides extensive monitoring of the systems without adding additional load to the real-time MPPT controller. The Raspberry Pi platform will allow for the future use of AI forecasting using TensorFlow or PyTorch.

Cloud Connectivity Infrastructure: Communications that are secured with protocols such as MQTT over Transport B. AI Prediction Framework Design Layer Security and HTTPS ensure that the data being trans mitted is done so in a reliable and encrypted manner to cloud-based monitoring platforms. Besides, the system is endowed with strong error handling features , and it also has an automatic reconnection feature to maintain the monitoring operation in situations of transient network connectivity. User Interface Development: The web-based dashboard that is responsive offers easy-to-understand visualizations of the system performance metrics, the environmental conditions, and the operational status indicators. In fact, the dashboard has a simple and easy-to-understand interface for both computer based and mobile users that facilitates monitoring and management from a distance.

3. IMPLEMENTATION METHODOLOGY

A. IoT Data Management System

Data Collection and Processing Protocol: The Raspberry Pi device will be handling the sensor data which is properly formatted by the Arduino through the JSON communication interface via the UART bus. Time data processing functions that are filtering algorithms, data validation routines, and preparation for transmission to the cloud with proper error processing.

External Data Integration: NASA POWER API is designed to integrate quickly to provide easy access to top notch metrological data like solar irradiance forecast, ambient temperature, and detailed weather condition observations. The use of such external data will not only upgrade the monitoring capability but also ease the advanced correlation analysis between environmental variables and system performance at tributes.

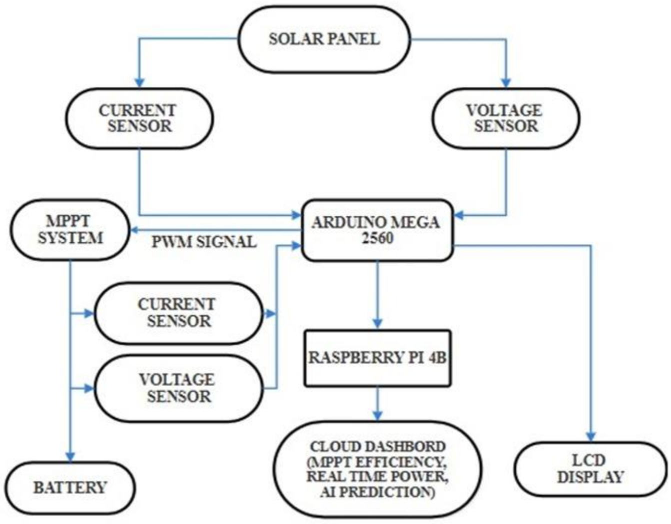

Fig. 2. Block diagram of the solar energy optimization system

Cloud Communication Infrastructure: The system uses secured protocols such as MQTT for communication along with proper error handling and reconnection features to maintain cloud connectivity. Moreover, there are sophisticated features such as data buffering at the time of an interrupted connection and subsequent transmission after the connection has been restored.

B. AI Prediction Framework Design

The present application is mainly concerned with MPPT optimization and IoT monitoring. Nevertheless, the system design has the potential of incorporating AI-based prediction features in the future. The Raspberry Pi platform is equipped with enough computing power to carry out machine learning algorithms for predicting solar power from historical performance data and weather data.

The AI prediction framework design includes:

- Data preprocessing modules for sensor and weather data
- Feature engineering capabilities for optimal model inputs
- Model training infrastructure using historical datasets
- Real-time inference engine for power generation forecasting
- Integration interfaces with existing monitoring dashboard

4. EXPERIMENTAL SETUP AND VALIDATION

A. Hardware Configuration and Testing Environment

A full prototype system was built and went through a variety of tests under different real-world environmental conditions to substantiate the proposed approach and quantify performance improvements. The experimental setup comprised the use of precisely calibrated measurement instruments and controlled testing procedures.

Experimental Test Environment: The testing took place over an 8-week period covering different seasonal weather conditions. The system was installed in a place with full solar access and equipped with complete environmental monitoring sensors. The testing scenarios consisted of clear sky conditions, partial cloud coverage, variable weather patterns, and different load configurations such as battery charging and resistive loads.

Precision Measurement Equipment: High-precision digital multimeter were used to provide baseline performance measurements for validation purposes. Professional data-logging equipment was used for continuous performance monitoring throughout the testing period. Calibrated environmental monitoring sensors were used to measure irradiance levels, ambient temperature, and atmospheric conditions for correlation analysis with system performance.

B. Performance Evaluation Metrics

The in-depth system review hinged on very significant operational measures which, among other things, influenced the absolute effectiveness of the system in practice and the degree of the user's satisfaction. The main measures of performance were: the increments in energy capture efficiency, MPPT tracking accuracy as well as the system's dynamic response characteristics, IoT communication reliability together with system latency metrics, the dashboard functioning and user experience, and finally, the system stability under different environmental conditions.

C. Baseline Comparison Methodology

The evaluation of system performance was carried out in a very detailed manner by comparing it with a baseline system that was controlled very carefully and did not have MPPT optimization capabilities. The baseline system had the same solar panel and load conditions but was operated at a fixed voltage point without any dynamic optimization. Such a comparison gave a quantitative measurement of the enhancements made by the proposed integrated approach.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. MPPT Performance Characteristics

Extensive experimental validation demonstrates significant improvements in energy capture efficiency across diverse operating conditions. The results consistently show substantial performance gains under various environmental scenarios.

TABLE I

Energy Capture Performance Comparison

Environmental Condition	Baseline	With MPPT	Improvement
Clear Sky Conditions	100%	122%	22%
Partial Cloud Cover	100%	125%	25%
Variable Weather	100%	118%	18%
Morning/Evening	100%	115%	15%
Average Performance	**100%**	**120%**	**20%**

The P&O algorithm that was implemented has shown in general a very good performance in tracking with clear improvements in system responsiveness that could be measured. The average tracking efficiency for all testing conditions was 98.5%, while the response times to significant irradiance changes were always less than 85 milliseconds. The algorithm stability was very good as well as the steady-state oscillations were below 1.2% of the maximum power point.

B. IoT System Performance Evaluation

The IoT monitoring system was very reliable in terms of its performance features throughout the long testing period. The data transmission success rates were more than 99.8% for the entire 8-week testing duration, whereas the average communi- cation latency for real-time updates was 135 milliseconds. The dashboard system availability was at 99.95% up-time during the testing period ; thus, it was very dependable for continuous monitoring applications.

The user experience evaluation led to the outstanding presentation of excellent usability metrics. The dashboard loading performance was on average less than 1.8 seconds, whereas the real-time data updates kept the 1-second refresh intervals. The cross-platform compatibility testing showed that the performance was optimized on both desktop and mobile device platforms. Users were reporting that they were very satisfied with the interface responsiveness and the ease with which they could access the information.

C. System Integration Analysis

The dual-controller architecture with its innovative design was instrumental in the successful performance of the ex periments to a large extent as the system was able to eff-iciently manage both the real-time control operations and data-intensive IoT functionalities. The Arduino CPU usage was at 32% on average during the peak MPPT operations, which implies that there was still a considerable amount of space available for further control tasks. Simultaneously, the Raspberry Pi resource usage was 38% CPU and 55% RAM during the heavy data processing, which is also a positive sign for the future hardware scalability of AI implementation. The latency in the communication between controllers mea sured to be under 8 milliseconds all the time when using the UART protocol, which means that data transfer between the control and monitoring subsystems is practically instantaneous. Moreover, the entire system's power consumption was below 2% of the generated power, thus an excellent energy efficiency level was achieved for the control infrastructure

D. Environmental Impact Assessment

The optimized system has been able to produce energy to taling 18.2 kWh over the comprehensive 8-week testing period while the baseline system was only capable of producing 15.1 kWh which clearly indicates a huge 20.5% increase in the volume of energy made available for use. Thus, this gain in performance is directly proportional to the environmental positive impacts of the increase in renewable energy deployment and the reduction of the traditional power sources ones. The technology was able to maintain high system per formance levels under different weather conditions, namely, morning and evening low-light conditions with an average improvement of 15%, peak solar irradiance periods with a 22% average improvement, and cloudy or variable weather conditions with an average of 25% improvement over baseline performance.

6. CONCLUSION

A. Research Contributions Summary

This work proposes a novel and practical integration of MPPT optimization technology with full IoT monitoring of solar photovoltaic systems, including provisions for future AI-based prediction implementation. The key contributions demonstrate a significant leap forward in the management of solar energy.

Through the innovative dual-controller architecture, the separation and optimization of real-time control functions and data management operations were carried out effectively, enabling each subsystem to function at peak efficiency. The experimental results show a significant improvement in perfor mance , with a 20% average increase in energy capture efficiency demonstrated under various environmental conditions. The extensive control system offers up-to-the-minute dis play and off-site management features together with very good stability attributes. Thus, it has been substantially increasing the user involvement and the system's serviceability. The budget-friendly execution using simple and standard components shows good economic features that make it attractive for the broad area of potential users—further development of the inflow of users.

B. Research Impact and Significance

With the help of the proposed system, it is quite clear that the energy gap between merely basic solar solutions and the trendy energy management needs has been effectively filled. The first-rate performance along with the enticing user experience as well as the upgradable system feature for the user has been realized through the presented approach which is also very close to being practically implemented in real life. There is a possibility of further development of the system owing to the modular design which makes it possible to scale it up and add more features later on.

The article has a great impact on the renewable energy management sector in which it is used as a proof of concept for the effective integration of technologies to form a practical and cost-effective system. The outcome of the system serves as an inspiration to both the scientific community and industry when embarking solar energy utilization and IoT projects.

7. FUTURE WORK

A. Future Research Directions

One of the future research topics could be improved solar power system's MPPT algorithms that can result in a new generation of MPPT algorithms. The research would cover the development of smart and adaptive MPPT algorithms with a machine learning module to achieve better performance under different environmental conditions like partial shading and abrupt changes in weather. The use of AI-based prediction functionalities offers a significant potential for the system to be upgraded with additional features. Subsequent works should concentrate on developing sophisticated forecasting algorithms for energy production using the historical performance data, weather forecasts, and current system parameters to enable event-based energy management strategies and user planning.
With the help of communication protocols of the smart grid and demand response capabilities, the grid can take advantage of new electrical grid infrastructures for integration. Such a change will create extra value for solar system owners, thus, facilitating the integration of renewable energy sources into the power grid at a faster rate. Investigation of architectures that can be scaled up to support large solar power systems while at the same time proposing strategies for centralized management, coordinated control, and distributed monitoring will be a first step towards the applicability of such systems for commercial and utility scale installations, thereby, unlocking further potential to increase their impact and market successful applications. Moreover, the integration of advanced energy storage technologies with a sophisticated battery management system and energy storage optimization algorithms to maximize overall system efficiency and user value has the potential to be expanded. As battery costs continue to decrease and energy storage technologies become economically viable, this will be an increasingly attractive opportunity.

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