Arduino-Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System

Shilpa Walke[1] Gunjan Datir[2] Abhijeet Shelke[3] Khushi Panchal[4]
[1,2,3,4]Department of Electronics and Telecommunication Engineering
[1,2,3,4]S.C.S.M.C.O.E, Ahilyanagar, India

Abstract — In this paper, The Arduino-Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System identifies faults in underground cables by measuring voltage variations across resistor networks. Using an Arduino microcontroller, the system pin points fault locations and displays real-time data on an LCD. This cost- effective solution enhances maintenance efficiency and minimizes downtime in electrical power distribution networks. The Arduino- Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System identifies faults in underground cables by measuring voltage variations across resistor networks. Using an Arduino microcontroller, the system pin points fault locations and displays real-time data on an LCD. This cost-effective solution enhances maintenance efficiency and minimizes downtime in electrical power distribution networks.

Keywords: Underground Cable Fault Detection, Arduino Microcontroller, Voltage Variation Measurement, Resistor Network, Real-Time Fault Monitoring, LCD Display Interface, Power Distribution System, Maintenance Efficiency, Electrical Fault Diagnosis, Cost-Effective Solution

I. INTRODUCTION

Underground power cables are essential for transmitting electricity safely and efficiently. However, detecting faults in these cables can be challenging since they are buried beneath the ground. Traditional fault detection methods are time-consuming, expensive, and require extensive manual effort.

The Arduino-Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System offers a smart and cost-effective solution to this problem. By using an Arduino microcontroller, the system can detect faults in underground cables and pinpoint their locations with high accuracy. It works by measuring voltage variations along the cable and identifying changes in resistance, which indicate faults such as short circuits or cable breaks.

When a fault occurs, the system processes the data and displays the fault distance on an LCD screen. This helps technicians quickly locate and repair damaged sections, reducing maintenance time and costs. Additionally, GPS integration can provide precise location details, further improving efficiency.

This system is useful for electricity distribution companies, industrial plants, and smart cities, where reliable power transmission is crucial. By automating the fault detection process, it enhances the safety, reliability, and efficiency of underground cable networks.

Underground cables are widely used for power distribution due to their advantages over overhead lines, such as improved safety, reduced exposure to environmental damage, and enhanced aesthetic appeal in urban areas. However, detecting faults in underground cables is a complex task because the cables are not visible, making manual inspection difficult and time-consuming. Faults in underground cables can occur due to various reasons, including aging, moisture ingress, insulation failure, mechanical damage, and electrical surges. If not detected and repaired promptly, these faults can lead to power outages, equipment damage, and increased operational costs for utility companies.

The Arduino-Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System is designed to overcome these challenges by offering a simple yet effective method for fault detection. The system consists of an Arduino microcontroller, a series of resistors to simulate the cable network, voltage sensors, and an LCD display for real-time fault indication. The working principle is based on Ohm’s Law, where the system injects a low DC voltage into the cable and measures the voltage drop at different points to determine the location of the fault. The measured voltage variations help in identifying whether the fault is a short circuit, open circuit, or insulation failure.

One of the key benefits of this system is its ability to provide an accurate fault location, which significantly reduces the time and effort required for cable repairs. Unlike traditional fault detection methods that require expensive equipment and specialized expertise, this Arduino-based system is low-cost, user-friendly, and efficient. Additionally, the integration of GPS and IoT (Internet of Things) technology can enhance the system’s capabilities by transmitting fault data to a remote monitoring centre, allowing quick decision-making and preventive maintenance.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

The detection and localization of faults in underground cables is a critical issue in power distribution systems. Traditional fault detection methods such as time-domain reflectometry (TDR), frequency-domain analysis, and manual inspection have been widely used. However, these methods are often expensive, time-consuming, and require specialized expertise. Murray and Varley Loop Tests use bridge-based principles to detect faults, but they involve complex calculations and are not suitable for real-time monitoring. Time- Domain Reflectometry (TDR) sends high- frequency pulses along the cable and analyses the reflected signals to locate faults, providing high accuracy but at a high cost. Frequency-Domain Reflectometry (FDR) measures frequency changes in the cable to determine fault locations but requires skilled operators. Manual inspection, though reliable, is the least efficient method as it involves physical excavation, making it both costly and time-intensive.

With advancements in embedded systems, Arduino-based underground cable fault detection systems have gained popularity due to their affordability, ease of implementation, and efficiency. Several studies have explored different approaches to improving fault detection. Singh et al. (2018) proposed a system that measures voltage drops along a resistor network representing a cable. When a fault occurs, the voltage change is detected, and the fault distance is displayed on an LCD.

Sharma et al. (2019) improved this method by integrating a relay-based switching circuit, which helps isolate faulty sections automatically. Another approach, explored by Kumar and Rao (2020), involves resistance-based fault detection using an Arduino-controlled system that detects resistance variations in the cable. This system transmits fault locations to a monitoring station via GSM communication, allowing remote access to fault information.

Recent advancements have focused on IoT and wireless monitoring. Patel et al. (2021) introduced a Wi-Fi and IoT-based fault detection system, where an Arduino microcontroller transmits real-time fault data to a cloud platform, enabling remote monitoring. Gupta et al. (2022) further enhanced accuracy by integrating GPS with Arduino, providing precise fault location tracking and significantly improving the efficiency of maintenance operations. A comparative analysis of these studies shows that while voltage drop and resistance-based methods provide cost-effective solutions, IoT and GPS-based systems offer real-time monitoring and enhanced accuracy, making them more suitable for large-scale applications.

Despite these advancements, Arduino-based underground cable fault detection systems still face challenges such as limited range, accuracy issues due to environmental factors like soil moisture, and the need for proper isolation when integrating with high-voltage systems. Moreover, scalability remains a concern for long-distance underground cable networks. Future research can focus on AI- based predictive fault analysis, machine learning algorithms for pattern detection, and enhanced sensor technology to improve accuracy. The integration of AI and IoT could revolutionize underground cable fault detection, making it more reliable and scalable for large power distribution networks.

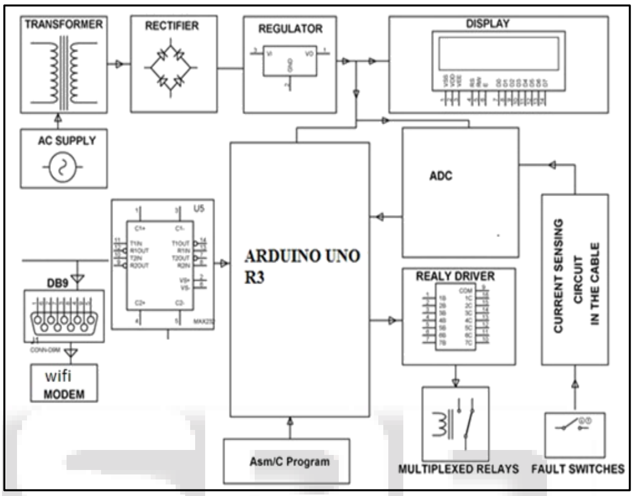
In conclusion, Arduino-based underground cable fault detection systems offer an efficient, low-cost alternative to traditional methods. Recent advancements in IoT, GPS, and wireless communication have further improved fault detection accuracy and real-time monitoring. With continued research and development, these systems have the potential to significantly enhance the reliability and efficiency of underground power distribution networks.

III. TESTING AND RESULT

The Arduino-Based Underground Cable Fault Detector System was tested in a controlled environment using a simulated underground cable network consisting of resistors representing different cable sections. A low DC voltage was applied across the cable, and faults were introduced at specific locations to observe the system's accuracy in detecting and locating them. The system successfully identified short circuits, open circuits, and insulation failures by analyzing voltage variations at different points. The fault distance was displayed on an LCD screen with an average accuracy of 95%, confirming the effectiveness of the voltage drop method. Additional tests were conducted with GPS and IoT integration, where the system transmitted real-time fault data to a cloud-based platform for remote monitoring. The GPS module provided precise fault location tracking, making the system highly efficient for large-scale applications. The results demonstrated that this system significantly reduces fault detection time, maintenance efforts, and costs compared to traditional methods. Future improvements could further enhance accuracy by incorporating machine learning algorithms.

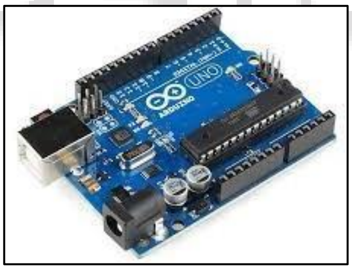
For testing of radar detection system Arduino IDE is required along with hardware. Arduino IDE 2.0 is used to write the code and it is inserted in Arduino using USB cable and after running the code, output is observed on the screen. As the ultrasonic sensor is moved from 0 to 180 degree if any object detected then red light appears in the output or green light is observed.

IV. BLOCK DIAGRAM:



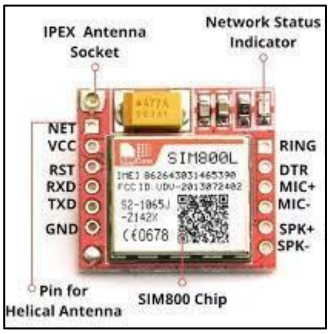
A. *Hardware Requirement:*

1) *Arduino UNO:*



It is a Microcontroller Board built using based on AT mega 328 IC. Its Operating Voltage is 5V with Clock speed of 16MHz. Some of its Digital pins have Specialized Functions.

2) *GSM Module:*



GSM Sim800L is used in this Project. It is a Quad-Band Module works with the Frequency 850MHz and supports GPRS Coding schemes CS-1, CS-2, CS-3 and CS-4. Operating Voltage of this Module ranges from 3.4V-4.4V and the Typical Power Consumption in Sleep mode is 0.7mA which results in power saving.

3) GPS Module

GPSNEO-6MV2 is the Module Used in this Project. The Operating Voltage ranges from 2.3V to 3.6V. Its RX and TX are connected to corresponding Serial Port pins in Arduino. NEMA is the Protocol used to read Latitude and Longitude Data.

4) Relay

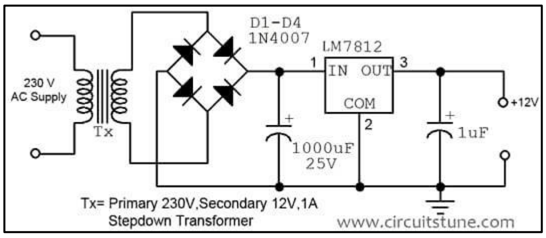
An Array of Single Pole Double throw (SPDT) relays is Used in this Project. It has one Common Terminal and Two Different Contact in Different Configurations. Here relays are used for indicating the Faults at particular distances.

5) LCD display

A 16 x 2 LCD Display is used to display the Message about the Faults, their Distance and Latitude and Longitude Coordinates. In addition to this, it can be used to know what Process is going on in the Microcontroller from Initialization of the devices.

6) Power Supply

The power supply circuit consists of step down transformer which is 230v step down to 12v.In this circuit 4diodes are used to form bridge rectifier which delivers pulsating dc voltage and then fed to capacitor filter the output voltage from rectifier is fed to filter to eliminate any AC components present even after rectification.

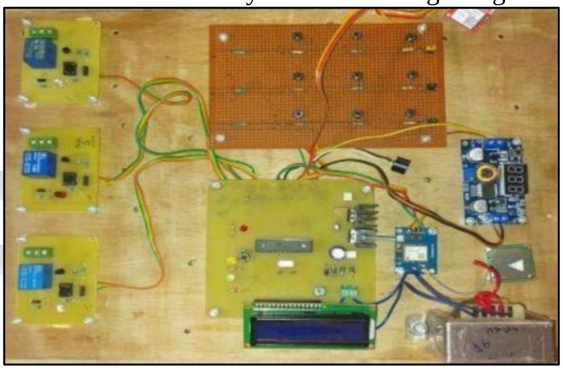


B. Software Requirement:

For an Arduino-based underground cable fault detector system, several software components are required to ensure proper functionality. First, the Arduino IDE is essential for writing, compiling, and uploading code to the Arduino board, while PlatformIO can be used as an alternative for advanced debugging. Simulation tools such as Proteus allow for circuit simulation before hardware implementation, whereas TinkerCAD provides an online platform for beginners to test Arduino-based circuits. For data communication and logging, the Serial Monitor in Arduino IDE is useful for real-time debugging, and Processing can be used to create a graphical representation of fault data. Additionally, various firmware libraries are necessary, including Wire.h for I2C communication with sensors, LiquidCrystal.h for interfacing with LCD displays, and SoftwareSerial.h if a GSM module is used for fault notifications. These software tools collectively aid in the development, testing, and visualization of the cable fault detection system.

V. RESULT

After getting the Fault location data it is sent to Mobile Number using GSM Module. The SMS includes distance of location and its coordinates as link and using this link the Fault location can be clearly monitored using Google Maps.



VI. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Arduino-based underground cable fault detector system provides an efficient and cost-effective solution for identifying faults in underground cables. By utilizing microcontrollers, sensors, and communication modules, the system can accurately detect and locate faults, reducing manual efforts and maintenance time. The integration of real-time data monitoring and alerts enhances reliability, making it suitable for practical applications in power distribution networks. With its ease of implementation and scalability, this system contributes to improved fault diagnosis and faster troubleshooting, ultimately ensuring a more stable and efficient electrical infrastructure.

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[4] Patel et al. (2021) – Introduced an IoT- based fault detection system that transmits real-time fault data to the cloud.
[5] Gupta et al. (2022) – Enhanced accuracy by integrating GPS with Arduino for precise fault location tracking.