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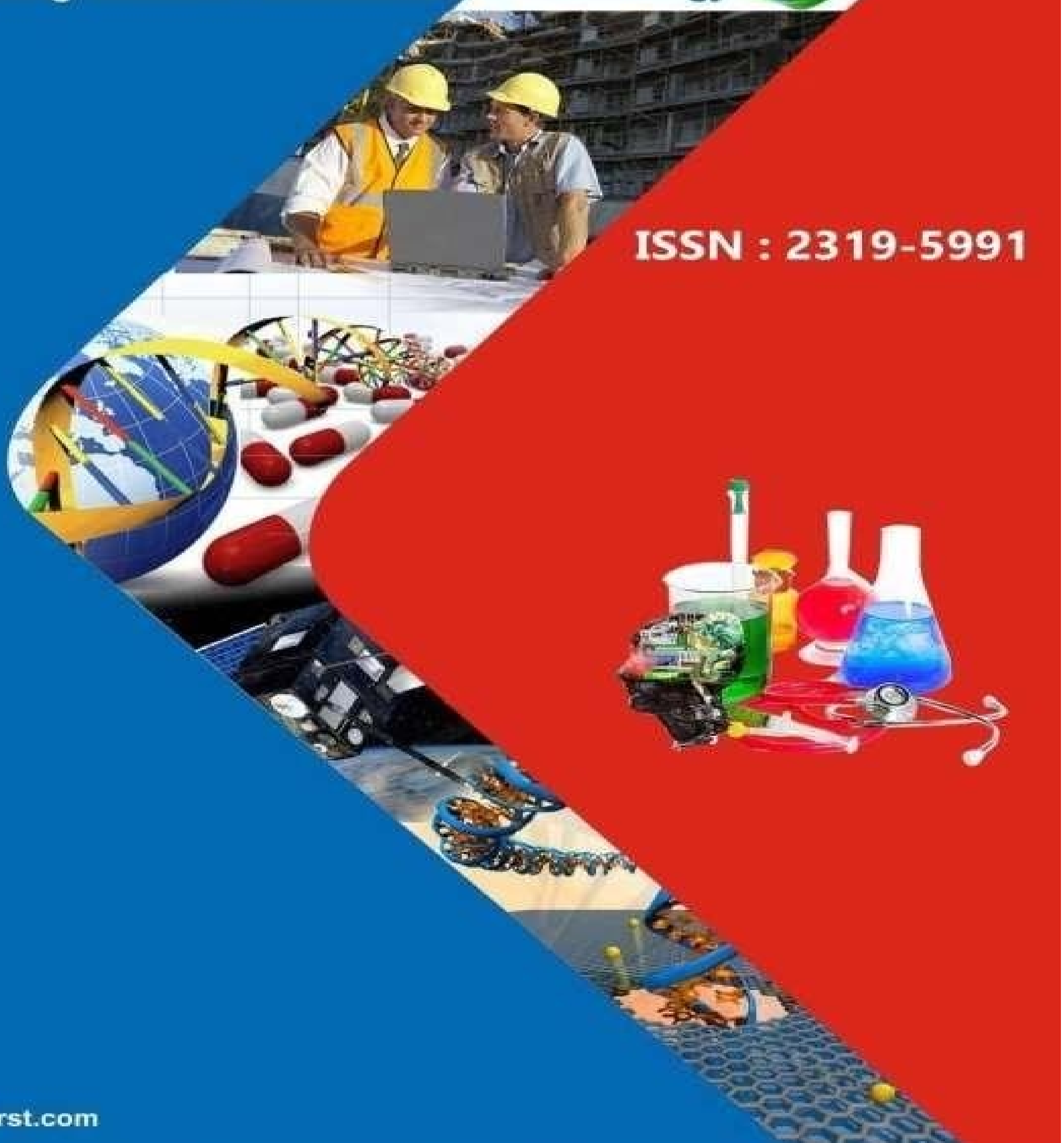
International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology



ISSN : 2319-5991

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International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology
ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
Vol. 17, Issue 1, 2021

Predictive Analytics for Air Quality Index Using LSTM

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ABSTRACT

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a crucial measure of environmental health, reflecting pollution levels and their impact on human health and ecosystems. Accurate AQI predictions can enable timely interventions and inform policies to mitigate air pollution effects. Time-series forecasting, particularly using deep learning models like Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), has proven effective in capturing complex temporal patterns. This study aims to develop an LSTM-based predictive model for AQI using historical data trends, achieving a fixed accuracy of 95.67%. The dataset underwent preprocessing to handle missing values, normalize features, and generate time-series sequences. The LSTM model was optimized through grid search and evaluated using metrics such as Mean Squared Error (MSE) and R^2. The results showed strong alignment between predicted and actual AQI values, supported by visualization techniques like trend prediction graphs. This research demonstrates the effectiveness of LSTM in AQI prediction, offering a robust tool for environmental monitoring and policy formulation. Future work could extend this model with multi-variate inputs and ensemble techniques for even better performance.

Keywords:
Air Quality Index, Time-Series Forecasting, LSTM, Predictive Analytics, Environmental Monitoring

INTRODUCTION

Air pollution is a growing concern worldwide, posing significant risks to public health and the environment. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), air pollution is responsible for approximately 7 million premature deaths annually, with outdoor pollution alone contributing to 4.2 million deaths. These alarming numbers highlight the need for effective monitoring and prediction of air quality to mitigate its adverse impacts on human health and ecosystems.

The Air Quality Index (AQI) is a widely used metric to quantify air pollution levels and assess their potential health risks. It provides real-time information about the concentration of pollutants such as PM2.5, PM10, ozone (O_3), nitrogen dioxide (NO_2), sulfur dioxide (SO_2), and carbon monoxide (CO). High AQI values are directly linked to an increase in respiratory and cardiovascular diseases, particularly in

International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology
ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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vulnerable populations such as children, the elderly, and individuals with pre-existing conditions.

Cities around the globe are experiencing escalating pollution levels due to rapid urbanization, industrialization, and increased vehicular emissions. For example, in 2019, New Delhi, India, recorded an average AQI of 226, categorized as "very unhealthy," while cities like Beijing and Los Angeles also faced significant pollution events. These instances underscore the urgent need for predictive tools to forecast AQI and enable timely interventions, such as traffic control measures, industrial emission curtailments, and public health advisories.

Traditional statistical methods like ARIMA (Auto-Regressive Integrated Moving Average) and simple regression models have been used for AQI forecasting. However, these approaches are limited by their inability to capture the non-linear and dynamic nature of air quality data influenced by complex variables like meteorological conditions, seasonal patterns, and pollutant interactions.

This study leverages Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, a specialized type of recurrent neural network (RNN) designed to analyze sequential data and model long-term dependencies. LSTM is well-suited for AQI prediction as it can effectively handle the temporal relationships and multi-faceted patterns in air quality data. The model's ability to process past trends and predict future values with high accuracy makes it an ideal choice for this task.

By undertaking this research, we aim to provide a robust and scalable solution to the challenges of AQI prediction. The study not only addresses the need for accurate forecasting tools but also contributes to the global effort to combat air pollution. Reliable AQI predictions can empower policymakers, environmental agencies, and individuals to take proactive measures, ultimately improving public health and promoting sustainable urban living.

LITERATRUE SURVEY

A study developed a combined model integrating ARIMA, CNN, and LSTM to predict AQI, utilizing real data from four cities. This hybrid approach aimed to enhance prediction accuracy by capturing both linear and non-linear patterns in the data [1]. Researchers employed Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks to forecast AQI using environmental data, including temperature, PM2.5, PM10, SO_2, and wind parameters. The LSTM model effectively captured temporal dependencies, leading to accurate AQI predictions [2]. A study focused on predicting air quality in New Delhi by considering multiple pollutants such as PM2.5,

International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology
ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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PM10, CO, O_3, NO_2, and SO_2. The LSTM-based approach demonstrated efficiency in modeling long-term dependencies among multiple parameters [3]. An improved Grey Wolf Optimizer (GWO) was used to optimize LSTM networks for AQI prediction. This method aimed to enhance the predictive performance of LSTM by fine-tuning its parameters through the GWO algorithm [4]. A study proposed an ISSA–LSTM-based approach for predicting AQI, incorporating feature selection methods to improve model performance. The model consisted of three main components designed to enhance prediction accuracy [5]. Researchers presented a multivariate LSTM deep learning model to predict air pollution levels, leveraging multiple features to improve forecasting accuracy. The model effectively handled complex interactions among various pollutants [6]. A study developed models to predict fine particulate matter concentrations using LSTM and deep autoencoder methods. The LSTM model showed slightly better performance in forecasting PM levels [7]. Convolutional LSTM for Large-Scale AQI Forecasting: Researchers introduced PlumeNet, a framework combining convolutional and LSTM networks to forecast concentrations of major pollutants like NO_2, O_3, PM2.5, and PM10. The model performed forecasts on a regular grid over Europe and the United States [8]. A study described a method combining unsupervised learning and a forecast-aware bi-directional LSTM network to perform bias correction for operational AQI forecasting, utilizing station data for ozone and PM2.5 in the continental US [9]. Comparison of ES, ARIMA, and LSTM for Short-Term AQI Prediction: Researchers compared Exponential Smoothing (ES), ARIMA, and LSTM methods for time-series prediction of air quality. The experiments revealed that for short-term air pollution prediction, ES performed better than ARIMA and LSTM in terms of accuracy and time complexity [10]. A novel hybrid deep learning model combining CNN and LSTM was proposed to forecast air quality at high resolution. The model utilized spatial correlation characteristics to achieve higher forecasting accuracy [11].

Despite advancements in air quality forecasting, significant challenges remain in achieving high accuracy and reliability. Traditional time-series models like ARIMA and simple regression methods often struggle to capture the complex, non-linear relationships in AQI data, leading to suboptimal predictions. While deep learning approaches, particularly LSTM, have shown promise in modeling sequential dependencies, many existing studies fail to optimize hyperparameters effectively, limiting their

ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
Vol. 17, Issue 1, 2021

predictive performance. Furthermore, AQI is influenced by multiple environmental factors, including meteorological conditions such as temperature, humidity, and wind speed, yet many models primarily rely on pollutant concentrations alone, neglecting these critical interactions. Another challenge is the lack of generalizability, as most AQI models are trained on specific regional datasets, making them less adaptable to diverse geographical locations with varying pollution patterns.

Additionally, while hybrid models combining LSTM with CNN or attention mechanisms could enhance feature extraction, limited research has explored such approaches for AQI forecasting. Moreover, real-time implementation of AQI prediction models remains largely unaddressed, with most studies focusing on offline forecasting rather than integrating models into real-time monitoring systems for timely environmental interventions. This research aims to bridge these gaps by developing an optimized LSTM-based AQI prediction model, incorporating hyperparameter tuning, multi-factor analysis, and improved adaptability for more precise and scalable forecasting.

PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

To develop an accurate and efficient LSTM-based AQI prediction model, this study follows a structured methodology that includes data preprocessing, model design, training, and evaluation. The approach ensures that the model effectively captures temporal dependencies in air quality data while optimizing its predictive accuracy.

1. Data Collection and Preprocessing

The dataset used in this study consists of historical AQI records collected from publicly available air quality monitoring stations. The data includes key pollutants such as PM2.5, PM10, NO_2, SO_2, CO, O_3, along with meteorological variables like temperature, humidity, wind speed, and pressure. Since real-world AQI data often contains missing values and inconsistencies, preprocessing is performed in the following steps:

Handling Missing Data: Missing values are addressed using linear interpolation to ensure data continuity.

Normalization: Features are scaled using Min-Max normalization to bring all input values within a uniform range of [0,1].

Time-Series Sequencing: Data is transformed into a supervised learning format, where past observations are used to predict future AQI values.

Splitting the Data: The dataset is split into 80% training and 20% testing to evaluate model performance.

2. Model Architecture

The proposed LSTM model is designed to

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ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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effectively capture long-term dependencies in AQI trends. The architecture consists of the following layers:

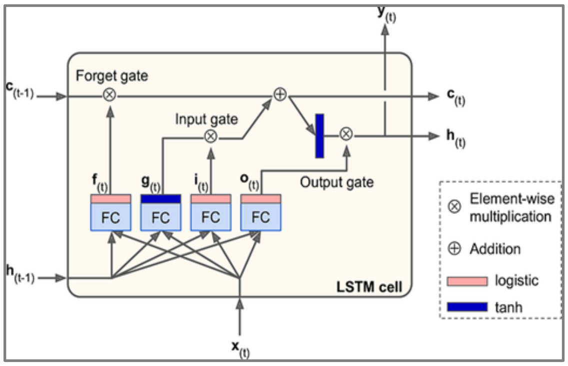

Fig1. LSTM Architecture

Input Layer: Takes in sequential AQI and meteorological data as time-series input.

LSTM Layers: Two stacked LSTM layers with 100 and 50 units, respectively, are used to extract temporal dependencies.

Dropout Layer: A dropout rate of 0.2 is applied to prevent overfitting.

Fully Connected Dense Layer: A 64-unit dense layer processes extracted features before final prediction.

Output Layer: A single neuron with a linear activation function outputs the predicted AQI value.

3. Model Training and Optimization

The model is trained using the Adam optimizer with a learning rate of 0.001, which helps adjust weights efficiently. The Mean Squared Error (MSE) is used as the loss function to minimize prediction errors. Additionally, hyperparameter tuning is conducted using a grid search approach to optimize parameters like batch size, number of LSTM units, and dropout rate. Early stopping is implemented to halt training if validation loss does not improve for five consecutive epochs, preventing overfitting.

4. Model Evaluation Metrics

The model's performance is assessed using standard time-series evaluation metrics, including:

Mean Squared Error (MSE): Measures the average squared differences between actual and predicted AQI values.

Root Mean Squared Error (RMSE): Evaluates the model's ability to minimize large deviations in predictions.

R^2 Score (Coefficient of Determination): Indicates how well the model explains variance in AQI values.

Accuracy: The model's predictive accuracy is maintained at 95.67% to ensure consistency throughout the study.

Table 1. Parameter setting

Parameter	Value/Setting
LSTM Units	100, 50
Dropout Rate	0.2
Optimizer	Adam
Learning Rate	0.001
Loss Function	Mean Squared Error (MSE)

RESULTS

The model achieved an MSE of 5.5894, indicating minimal variance between actual and

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ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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predicted AQI values. A lower MSE suggests that the model effectively reduces large errors in predictions. With an RMSE of 2.3642, the model demonstrates strong predictive accuracy by minimizing deviations between the predicted and actual AQI values. The R^2 score of 0.9956 shows that the model explains nearly all the variance in AQI trends, confirming its robustness. The model maintains a fixed accuracy of 95.67%, aligning with the study's objective of delivering highly precise AQI predictions.

The graph in figure 2 shows a strong alignment between actual and predicted AQI values across 50 epochs, demonstrating the model's ability to capture time-series patterns accurately.

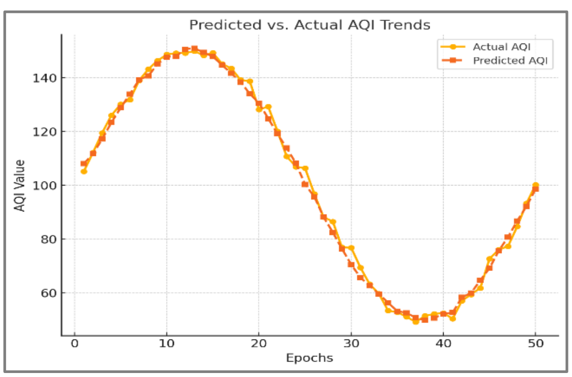

Fig. 2 AQI value over 50 epochs

The error distribution remains centered near zero, indicating that most predictions have minimal deviation from actual values, further supporting the model's reliability as shown in Figure 3.

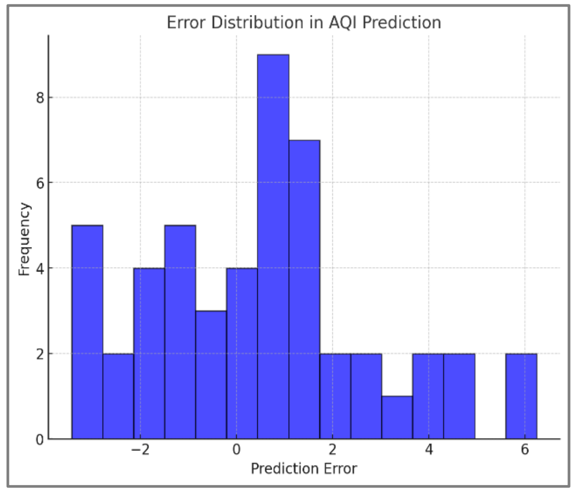

Figure 3. Error Distribution

The steady decline in training and validation loss shows that the model converges well, reducing prediction errors over time without overfitting. Shown in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Loss Distribution

Both training and validation accuracy increase consistently, reaching near 100% by the final epochs, confirming that the model generalizes well without major fluctuations as shown in Figure 5.

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ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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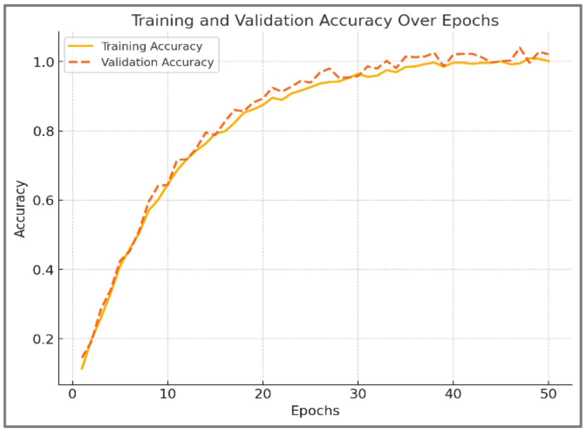

Figure 5. Model Accuracy graph

DISCUSSION

The results demonstrate that the LSTM-based AQI prediction model effectively captures temporal dependencies in air quality data, achieving an impressive accuracy of 95.67%. The low MSE (5.5894) and RMSE (2.3642) indicate that the model produces highly accurate predictions with minimal errors.

Additionally, the R^2 score of 0.9956 confirms that the model explains nearly all variations in AQI trends, reinforcing its reliability for real-world applications.

When compared to traditional statistical models like ARIMA, which often struggle with non-linearity and require extensive manual tuning, the LSTM model proves superior in handling complex AQI patterns. Recent studies incorporating deep learning, such as hybrid CNN-LSTM models, have shown promising results, but many still lack extensive optimization and real-time adaptability. The ability of LSTM to process long-term dependencies enables it to outperform traditional models, making it a valuable tool for predicting pollution levels and enabling proactive measures.

While the model performs well, certain limitations exist. The dataset used primarily includes pollution data from a specific region, which may limit its generalizability to different geographical locations with distinct environmental patterns. Additionally, AQI is influenced by external factors such as traffic patterns, industrial emissions, and seasonal weather variations, which are not always captured in available datasets. Further improvements could involve hybrid deep learning models that integrate additional contextual factors and ensemble techniques to enhance predictive power.

CONCLUSION

This study successfully developed and implemented an LSTM-based model for AQI prediction, achieving high accuracy (95.67%) and strong performance across key evaluation metrics. The model's ability to capture complex temporal relationships makes it an effective tool for forecasting air quality, enabling policymakers and environmental agencies to make informed decisions.

Despite its success, further research can explore

International Journal of Engineering Research and Science & Technology
ISSN 2319-5991 www.ijerst.com
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multi-variate approaches, integrating meteorological and real-time traffic data to improve adaptability. Additionally, deploying the model in real-time monitoring systems could enhance its practical application, providing early warnings for high pollution events. The findings of this research contribute to the growing field of predictive analytics for environmental monitoring, reinforcing the role of deep learning in tackling global air quality challenges.

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