Prof. Kiran Khedkar, 2026, 14:3
ISSN (Online): 2348-4098
ISSN (Print): 2395-4752

International Journal of Science, Engineering and Technology
An Open Access Journal

Smart Underground Drainage and Gas Monitoring Systems

Prof. Kiran Khedkar, Vrunda Ghuge, Anjali Choure, Anamika Khawale
Department of Electronics and Telecommunication PGMCOE, Wagholi, Pune, India.

Abstract- Urban drainage systems play a critical role in maintaining sanitation and environmental health. However, manual monitoring of underground drainage systems is inefficient and risky due to the presence of toxic gases such as methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), and hydrogen sulfide (H_2S). This paper proposes a smart underground drainage and gas monitoring system using IoT and sensor-based technologies. The system uses gas sensors, ultrasonic sensors, and water level sensors integrated with a microcontroller (NodeMCU/Arduino) to continuously monitor drainage conditions. When hazardous conditions are detected, alerts are sent via GSM along with real-time data updates to cloud platforms. The proposed system improves safety, reduces manual effort, and ensures early detection of blockages and gas leaks.

Keywords: IoT, Drainage Monitoring, Gas Sensors, Arduino, NodeMCU, Smart City.

I. INTRODUCTION

Urban drainage systems are a fundamental part of modern city infrastructure, responsible for the efficient removal of wastewater, rainwater, and sewage. Proper functioning of these systems is essential to maintain hygiene, prevent flooding, and reduce the spread of waterborne diseases. However, in many developing regions, drainage systems are still monitored manually, which is inefficient, time-consuming, and highly prone to human error.

One of the major challenges in underground drainage systems is the accumulation of solid waste, which leads to blockages and overflow conditions. These issues often go unnoticed until they result in severe consequences such as urban flooding, road damage, and environmental pollution. As highlighted in previous studies, lack of real-time monitoring is one of the primary reasons behind delayed response to drainage failures.

Another critical concern is the presence of hazardous gases such as methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), hydrogen sulfide (H_2S), and ammonia (NH_3), which are commonly found in sewage environments. Exposure to these gases can cause serious health issues or even fatalities among drainage workers. Several incidents have demonstrated that the absence of proper gas detection systems significantly increases occupational risks.

Traditional monitoring methods not only fail to provide real-time data but also lack automated alert mechanisms, making it difficult for authorities to take immediate action. Moreover, manual inspection exposes workers to dangerous conditions without prior knowledge of gas concentration or blockage levels.

With the advancement of Internet of Things (IoT) technology, it is now possible to develop intelligent systems that can continuously monitor environmental parameters and provide real-time alerts. IoT-based drainage monitoring systems use sensors and communication modules to collect and transmit data, enabling authorities to take preventive measures before critical situations arise.

In this paper, a smart underground drainage and gas monitoring system is proposed, which integrates gas sensors, water level sensors, and ultrasonic sensors with a microcontroller-based IoT platform. The system is designed to detect hazardous conditions, monitor drainage status in real-time, and send alerts to concerned authorities, thereby improving safety, efficiency, and overall management of urban drainage systems.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

Several researchers have proposed systems to improve the monitoring and management of

underground drainage systems using IoT and sensor-based technologies.

An IoT-based smart drainage monitoring system was proposed by Sultana et al., which uses sensors such as MQ135 for gas detection, ultrasonic sensors for sewage level measurement, and water level sensors to monitor drainage conditions in real time . The system sends alert messages via GSM along with location details using GPS when threshold values are exceeded. While the system provides real-time monitoring and alert mechanisms, it primarily focuses on environmental monitoring and lacks advanced safety measures for workers.

Karale et al. developed a smart underground drainage blockage detection system using ultrasonic and gas sensors integrated with Arduino . The system detects blockages, monitors water levels, and identifies harmful gases such as methane and carbon monoxide. Alerts are generated when abnormal conditions are detected. However, the system has limitations in terms of real-time cloud integration and scalability for large urban environments.

A real-time drainage monitoring system using Wireless Sensor Networks (WSN) was introduced by Sonawane et al., which utilizes multiple sensor nodes deployed across drainage systems to monitor gas levels, blockage, and water levels . The collected data is transmitted to a central server for analysis. Although the system provides continuous monitoring, it increases system complexity and implementation cost due to the use of multiple nodes and communication modules.

Additionally, a life-saving smart drainage monitoring system was proposed to enhance the safety of sewage workers by detecting harmful gases and providing alert mechanisms through wearable devices . The system includes gas sensors, vibration alerts, and oxygen supply mechanisms to protect workers. While it improves worker safety, it does not provide a complete solution for real-time drainage monitoring and data visualization.

Research Gap:
From the above studies, it is observed that existing systems either focus on monitoring environmental parameters or worker safety individually. There is a lack of an integrated system that combines real-time monitoring, gas detection, alert mechanisms, and cloud-based data visualization in a cost-effective and scalable manner. Therefore, there is a need for a comprehensive smart drainage monitoring system that addresses all these aspects efficiently.

III. DESIGN GOALS

The design of a smart underground drainage and gas monitoring system aims to address the limitations of traditional drainage management methods and improve overall safety, efficiency, and reliability. The primary goal of the proposed system is to develop an automated and intelligent solution that continuously monitors drainage conditions and provides real-time alerts.

One of the major objectives is to detect hazardous gases such as methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), and hydrogen sulfide (H_2S), which are commonly present in underground drainage systems and pose serious risks to human life. The system should be capable of identifying gas concentrations and triggering alerts when the levels exceed predefined safety thresholds.

Another important goal is to monitor water levels and detect blockages within the drainage system. Overflow or clogging can lead to urban flooding, environmental pollution, and damage to infrastructure. Therefore, the system should use appropriate sensors to identify abnormal water levels and blockage conditions at an early stage.

The system is also designed to provide real-time monitoring and data transmission using IoT technology. By integrating microcontrollers such as NodeMCU or Arduino with cloud platforms, the collected data can be continuously updated and accessed remotely by authorities. This ensures faster decision-making and timely maintenance actions.

A key design objective is to implement an automatic alert mechanism. When any parameter exceeds its threshold value, the system should immediately notify concerned authorities through GSM messages, alarms, or cloud notifications. This reduces dependency on manual inspection and minimizes response time.

Additionally, the system aims to be cost-effective and scalable, making it suitable for deployment in both small-scale and large-scale urban environments. The use of low-cost sensors and widely available microcontrollers ensures affordability and ease of implementation.

Finally, the system focuses on enhancing worker safety by reducing direct human exposure to hazardous environments. By providing prior information about gas levels and drainage conditions, workers can take necessary precautions before entering the drainage system.

In summary, the proposed system is designed to deliver a reliable, automated, and efficient solution for underground drainage monitoring, ensuring improved public safety and better management of urban infrastructure.

IV. SYSTEM

The proposed smart underground drainage and gas monitoring system is designed to provide continuous monitoring of drainage conditions using IoT and sensor-based technologies. The system integrates multiple sensors, a microcontroller, and communication modules to ensure real-time data collection, processing, and alert generation.

The core of the system is a NodeMCU (ESP8266) / Arduino microcontroller, which acts as the central processing unit. It receives input data from various sensors deployed in the drainage system and processes it to determine the current environmental conditions.

The system consists of the following main components:

- **Gas Sensors (MQ Series):** Used to detect harmful gases such as methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), and ammonia (NH_3). These sensors continuously monitor gas concentration levels in the drainage system.
- **Ultrasonic Sensor:** Measures the distance between the sensor and the sewage level to detect blockage or overflow conditions.
- **Water Level Sensor**: Detects the level of water in the drainage system and identifies abnormal rise in water levels.
- **GSM Module:** Sends alert messages to authorities when any parameter exceeds the predefined threshold.
- **Buzzer and LED Indicators**: Provide immediate local alerts in case of hazardous conditions.

System Architecture

The system operates in three major stages: data acquisition, processing, and communication.

1. Data Acquisition:

Sensors continuously collect real-time data related to gas concentration, water level, and blockage status. These sensors are placed inside manholes or drainage pipelines to monitor environmental conditions.

2. Data Processing:

The collected sensor data is sent to the microcontroller (NodeMCU/Arduino), where it is compared with predefined threshold values. If any parameter exceeds safe limits, the system identifies it as a hazardous condition.

3 Communication and Alert System:

Once a threshold is crossed, the system performs the following actions:

- Activates buzzer and LED for local alert
- Sends SMS alerts using GSM module
- Uploads real-time data to cloud platforms (such as Adafruit IO or ThingSpeak)

This type of real-time monitoring and alert mechanism is also observed in IoT-based drainage systems, where sensor data is transmitted to remote servers for analysis and visualization.

WORKING PRINCIPLE

The system continuously monitors drainage parameters. Under normal conditions, data is transmitted to the cloud for monitoring purposes. When abnormal conditions such as high gas concentration, increased water level, or blockage are detected, the system automatically triggers alerts.

The use of IoT enables remote monitoring, allowing authorities to access real-time data from any location. This significantly reduces response time and improves maintenance efficiency.

System Advantages

- Provides continuous and automated monitoring
- Enables early detection of hazardous conditions
- Reduces manual inspection and human risk
- Supports real-time data visualization and analysis
- Improves overall efficiency of drainage management

V. BLOCK DIAGRAM

Block Diagram Explanation

The block diagram represents the overall architecture of the Smart Underground Drainage and Gas Monitoring System, showing how different components interact to perform monitoring and alert functions.

1. Input Section (Sensors)

The system begins with multiple sensors placed inside the drainage system:

- **Gas Sensors (MQ Series):** Detect harmful gases like methane (CH_4), carbon monoxide (CO), and ammonia (NH_3).
- **Ultrasonic Sensor:** Measures the distance to detect blockage or overflow conditions.
- **Water Level Sensor**: Monitors the level of sewage water in the drainage.

These sensors continuously collect environmental data from underground conditions.

2. Processing Unit (Microcontroller)

- The NodeMCU / Arduino acts as the brain of the system.
- It receives input from all sensors and processes the data.
- The system compares sensor values with predefined threshold limits.
- If values are normal → data is just monitored
- If values exceed limits → system triggers alert

3. Communication Module

- GSM Module: Sends SMS alerts to authorities when dangerous conditions are detected.
- Wi-Fi (NodeMCU): Uploads real-time data to cloud platforms like ThingSpeak or Adafruit IO.
- Enables remote monitoring + instant notification

4. Output Section (Alert System)

- Buzzer: Produces sound alert
- LED Indicators:
- Green → Normal condition
- Red → Danger detected
- Provides immediate local warning

5. Cloud / Monitoring System

- Data is stored and visualized on IoT dashboards.
- Authorities can monitor:
- Gas levels
- Water levels
- Blockage status
- Enables real-time tracking and decision-making

Working Flow Summary

Sensors → Microcontroller → Decision (Threshold Check) → GSM Alert + Buzzer + Cloud Upload → User/Authority

VI. ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful completion of the project titled “Smart Underground Drainage and Gas Monitoring Systems.”

We are especially thankful to our project guide, Prof. Kiran Khedkar, for their continuous guidance, valuable suggestions, and support throughout the development of this work. Their technical expertise and encouragement played a crucial role in shaping this project.

We would also like to thank the Head of the Department and faculty members of the Department of Computer Engineering/E&TC for providing the necessary resources, facilities, and a conducive environment for completing this project successfully. We extend our appreciation to our teammates for their cooperation, dedication, and collaborative efforts in every phase of the project. Each member's contribution was vital in achieving the desired outcomes.

Finally, we are grateful to our family and friends for their constant support, motivation, and encouragement throughout the project duration.

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