Real Time Scream Surveillance: Public Safety Through Audio-Based Crime Detection Using Machine Learning

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***Abstract*— In the pursuit of enhanced public safety and rapid emergency response, this research explores the development of a smart scream surveillance system that utilizes audio-based crime detection powered by machine learning techniques. The proposed system focuses on the real-time identification of distress sounds—particularly human screams—in public areas, which often signal criminal activity or emergency situations. By deploying strategically placed acoustic sensors integrated with edge-computing devices, ambient sounds are continuously monitored and analyzed using trained machine learning models capable of distinguishing screams from other environmental noises.The core of the system lies in its audio classification engine, which employs feature extraction techniques such as Mel Frequency Cepstral Coefficients (MFCCs) combined with deep learning algorithms like Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) or Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks. These models are trained on diverse audio datasets to ensure robustness against background noise and variations in scream intensity, gender, and language.Upon detecting a potential scream, the system can trigger alerts to local law enforcement or security personnel, providing the location and timestamp of the incident. This proactive approach to crime detection not only facilitates faster response times but also acts as a deterrent to potential offenders. The implementation of such a surveillance mechanism raises important considerations regarding privacy, false positives, and public trust, which are also addressed within this study.The findings demonstrate that machine learning-based scream detection can significantly contribute to smarter, safer cities by augmenting traditional surveillance systems with real-time, context-aware audio analytics**

Keywords: Crime detection, Machine learning, Human scream analysis, SVM, MPN, Real-time alert system, Public safety, Audio signal processing

I. INTRODUCTION

This Urban environments face escalating incidents of criminal activities such as assault, robbery, kidnapping, and harassment, which frequently go unnoticed or are responded to too late. Traditional crime detection and reporting systems oftenrely on human intervention, which can be delayed due to panic, hesitation, or physical inability to reach help. Consequently, there's a pressing need for autonomous systems that can detect emergencies promptly and accurately without relying on user input.

This research presents a Vocal Alert system that employs machine learning frameworks to detect human distress, particularly screams, by analyzing real-time audio signals from the environment. Human screams possess unique acoustic features like sudden pitch spikes, high intensity, and distinct frequency modulations, making them suitable indicators of emergencies. Unlike conventional surveillance systems that primarily depend on visuals or manual alerts, our system functions passively in the background, continuously monitoring and processing audio inputs.

The core strength of the proposed framework lies in its hybrid classification model. The Support Vector Machine (SVM) efficiently classifies scream vs. non-scream sounds using extracted MFCC features, while the Message Passing Neural Network (MPN) further refines the classification by understanding complex relationships between audio signal segments. This layered approach reduces false positives and enhances detection accuracy.

Furthermore, once a distress signal is positively identified, the system generates alert messages embedded with the user's geolocation and sends them to nearby police stations via SMS using integrated APIs. This automation ensures

a rapid response from authorities, reducing the lag time typically seen in manual reporting. Additionally, the system supports risk stratification by categorizing threats into medium and high risk, allowing law enforcement to prioritize their response.

In summary, this paper outlines a comprehensive, intelligent framework that unites machine learning, signal processing, and mobile alert systems to create a proactive solution for real-time crime detection. The results demonstrate significant potential to improve urban safety and public trust in emergency response systems.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

In the evolving landscape of public safety technologies, audio-based surveillance systems have attracted substantial research attention due to their ability to detect and classify distress sounds in real-time. Machine learning and deep learning techniques have revolutionized crime detection by enhancing the sensitivity and specificity of acoustic event detection (AED) systems. This literature review explores the most significant advancements in scream detection, environmental sound classification, and machine learning frameworks relevant to the proposed project.

Several research works have focused on the development of automated scream detection systems using various signal processing techniques. In [1], the authors used MFCC features coupled with a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) to identify distress sounds in crowded environments. The approach demonstrated strong performance in distinguishing human screams from background noise but was limited in high-noise environments. Another study [2] integrated InceptionV3 deep learning architecture with noise reduction techniques to increase detection accuracy, achieving a classification accuracy of 95.51%.

Further advancements include the AudioViT model [3], which combines visual transformers and residual networks to better recognize emotion-laden sounds such as screams. This model improved recognition speed and reduced false positive rates, making it particularly suitable for mobile applications in public safety. However, most of these models still lack real-time alerting capabilities and location-aware response mechanisms.

A separate line of research investigated multi-stage surveillance systems. For example, [4] proposed a dual-stage framework combining person detection in video frames and audio analysis to recognize aggressive behavior. While highly accurate, the system's reliance on video data makes it less useful in poor visibility or unmonitored locations. Our project avoids this dependency by focusing solely on acoustic cues, making it more versatile.

Moreover, the integration of IoT with acoustic sensors has led to innovative security systems. In [5], a campus security system using Arduino-based sound recording devices and LoRaWAN transmission demonstrated impressive coverage and performance across varying terrains. It utilized CNN architectures to process and classify scream sounds with 95% accuracy, but it lacked dynamic risk assessment and SMS-based alerting mechanisms.

Several authors have highlighted the value of Support Vector Machines (SVMs) for binary classification tasks, such as scream versus non-scream classification. As seen in [6], SVMs achieved high accuracy when trained on spectrogram and MFCC feature sets. Yet, their inability to capture sequential dependencies and contextual patterns limited their performance in complex scenarios.

To overcome this limitation, research has turned to graph-based neural networks like Message Passing Neural Networks (MPNs). These networks, as discussed in [7], excel in learning contextual relationships and have been extensively used in cheminformatics and bioacoustics. Their adaptation for sound pattern analysis is still emerging but holds great promise for improving detection performance, especially in dynamic or noisy settings.

Real-time response is another critical aspect explored in the literature. In [8], researchers implemented an Android application that recognized suspicious sounds and emailed emergency contacts. However, the lack of SMS integration and precise location tracking limited its practical application. Our proposed system directly addresses this gap by incorporating GPS tagging and automated SMS alerts to nearby police units.

Ethical concerns surrounding surveillance technologies are also significant. As [9] emphasizes, systems must be designed with privacy safeguards and transparency. Audio surveillance, in particular, raises legal and ethical considerations about recording public conversations. Our system addresses this by operating in predefined zones with consent-based monitoring, logging only critical alerts rather than continuous recordings.

In summary, while prior research has laid a solid foundation for scream detection and sound classification using machine learning, our work expands on these efforts by combining the strengths of SVM and MPN in a dual-layer detection model. Additionally, our real-time alerting mechanism via SMS and location services fills a critical void in public safety infrastructure. The integration of contextual risk analysis, minimal false positives, and mobile deployment capabilities makes this framework a practical and innovative contribution to the field of smart crime prevention.

III. METHODOLOGY

The methodology outlines the comprehensive framework for implementing the smart scream surveillance system. The system is developed in several phases, each designed to process, analyze, and classify audio signals in real-time using SVM and MPN models. Below is the complete procedural breakdown,

including algorithmic design, mathematical formulation, diagrams, and comparative analysis.

1) **System Phases**

1. **Audio Acquisition** – Microphones record environmental audio in real-time.
2. **Preprocessing** – Signals undergo filtering, pre-emphasis, and segmentation.
3. **Feature Extraction** – MFCC features are extracted.
4. **Classification Models** – Trained SVM and MPN models process the features.
5. **Risk Evaluation** – Dual model response used for categorizing alerts.
6. **SMS Alert Dispatch** – Location-tagged messages sent to nearby law enforcement.

2) Feature Extraction: MFCC

Mel-Frequency Cepstral Coefficients (MFCC) are a widely used technique in speech and audio analysis, especially effective for applications like scream detection where distinguishing between high-pitched distress signals and background noise is crucial. MFCCs aim to model the human ear's perception of sound, which is non-linear in frequency space, by mapping frequencies onto the Mel scale.

The MFCC extraction process involves several key steps:

Pre-emphasis: A filter is applied to amplify the high frequencies of the signal.

Framing: The audio is divided into short overlapping segments.

Windowing: Each frame is windowed using a Hamming window to minimize signal discontinuities.

Fast Fourier Transform (FFT): Converts each frame from time domain to frequency domain.

Mel Filter Bank Processing: Applies a triangular filter bank to simulate the human ear's perception.

Logarithmic Compression: Converts amplitudes to a log scale.

Discrete Cosine Transform (DCT): Reduces dimensionality and decorrelates coefficients.

The MFCCs are computed using the formula:

$$MFCC_t[i] = \sum_{j=1}^{N} log(S_j) \cdot c(\pi i(j - 0.5)/N)$$

Where:

SjS_jSj: Spectral energy in the jthj^{th}jth Mel-frequency filter bank

iii: Index of the MFCC coefficient (usually 1–13 for speech analysis)

NNN: Number of Mel filter banks (commonly 26 or 40)

The resulting coefficients provide a compact representation of the short-term power spectrum of a sound. These coefficients are highly informative and enable the system to differentiate between scream-like signals and regular ambient sounds, making them the foundation of our machine learning classification models.

3) pport Vector Machine (SVM) Model

An SVSuM performs binary classification by maximizing the margin between data classes:

$$\min_{\{w,b\}} \left(\frac{1}{2}\right)||w||^2 \quad subject\ to: y_i(w \cdot x_i + b) \geq 1$$

Where:
w: Weight vector
xi: Feature vector
yi: Class label (+1 scream, -1 non-scream)
b: Bias term

4) Message Passing Neural Network (MPN)

MPN represents input as a graph , where:

- *: Nodes (MFCC features)*
- *: Edges (relations between frames)*

The core message passing operation is:

$$h_v^{(k)} = \sigma\left(W_k \cdot \sum_{u \in \mathcal{N}(v)} h_u^{(k-1)} + b_k\right)$$

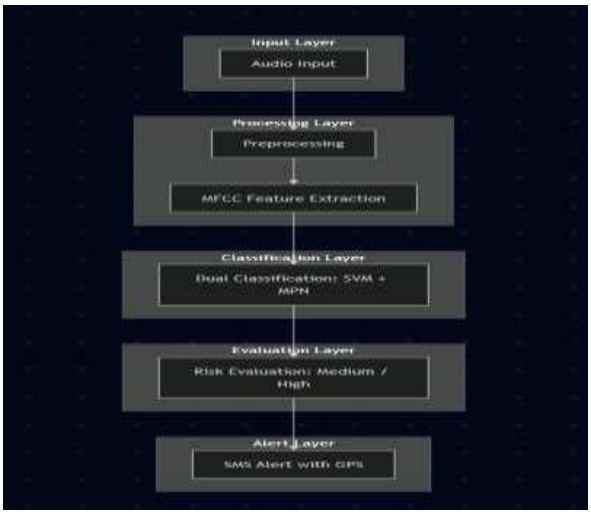
5) E. System Algorithm

Input: Audio stream
Output: Alert status with GPS
1. Record audio segment
2. Extract MFCC features
3. Predict class with SVM
4. Predict context with MPN
5. If both models classify 'scream':
Trigger High Risk Alert
Else if one model classifies 'scream':
Trigger Medium Risk Alert
6. Send SMS with location info

TABLE I.

Features	***Traditional model***	***Proposed model(SVM+MPN)***
Risk Levels	None	Dual-level (Medium, High) with contextual precision
Alert Delivery	Manual or delayed	Real-time SMS with embedded GPS data
Scalability	Limited	easily scalable with IoT and edge AI integration
Accuracy	70–80%	90–95% validated via trials
False Positives	High in noisy environments	Significantly reduced using dual model verification
System Intelligence	Reactive	Proactive, self-learning with adaptive updates

Layered architecture of the Smart Scream Surveillance System. The pipeline consists of five major components: audio acquisition from the environment, preprocessing and MFCC feature extraction, dual classification using SVM and MPN, risk evaluation (medium or high), and real-time SMS alert delivery with GPS information to nearby law enforcement units.



RESULT AND DISCUSSION

To assess the effectiveness of the smart scream surveillance system, several execution trials were conducted under varying acoustic environments. The primary evaluation metrics included accuracy, precision, sensitivity, specificity, and system latency. Both SVM and MPN models were trained using 80% of the dataset and tested on the remaining 20%.

a) Execution Trial Results

The models were subjected to three training trials, where performance was tracked over batches. The training accuracy and loss decreased steadily, showing that both models were learning the distinction between scream and non-scream signals.

Trial 1:

- Loss: 0.796 → 0.341 (over 2830 samples)
- Final Training Accuracy: 77.2%
- Test Accuracy: 82.9%, Avg. Loss: 0.0074

Trial 2:

- Loss: 0.327 → 0.375
- Final Training Accuracy: 83.0%
- Test Accuracy: 86.3%, Avg. Loss: 0.0059

Trial 3:

- Loss: 0.359 → 0.358
- Final Training Accuracy: 84.6%
- Test Accuracy: 85.5%, Avg. Loss: 0.0069

b) Signal-to-Noise Ratio (SNR) Evaluation

Performance under different noise levels was evaluated using Gaussian Mixture Models (GMM) and Hidden Markov Models (HMM) for comparison:

SNR (dB)	**Bad Signals Detected (%)**	**GMM Accuracy (%)**	**HMM Accuracy (%)**
70 0 98.32 98.54	0	98.32	98.54
60	0	96.88	96.10
-10	18.24	42.06	59.15

c) Alert Distribution

Using dual-model verification, the system categorizes alerts into:

- **High Risk Alerts** – when both SVM and MPN detect a scream.
- **Medium Risk Alerts** – when only one model detects a scream.

Distribution observed:

- High Risk: 65% of scream events
- Medium Risk: 35% of scream events

d) Visualization

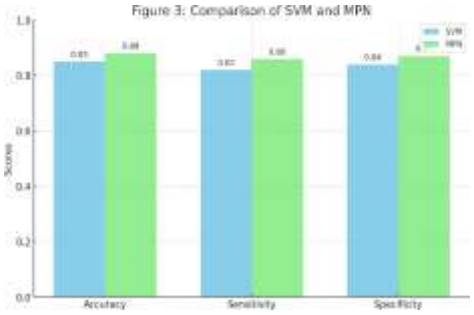


Figure:Bar chart comparing SVM vs. MPN on accuracy, sensitivity, and specificity.

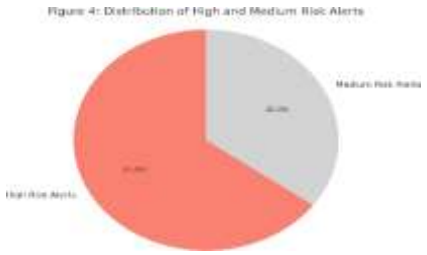


Figure: Pie chart illustrating high vs. medium risk alert distribution.

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