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# IoT-Based Automated Waste Segregation System for Smart Cities: A Human-Centric Approach to Sustainable Waste Management

Ayush Sharma[1], Jatin Kumar[2], Sachin Rawat[3], Yatindra Nath Pandey[4], Vatika Jalali[5]
*Noida Institute of Engineering and Technology, Greater Noida, AKTU*

***Abstract: Urbanization and a booming population are behind the global garbage challenge requiring innovative and sustainable solutions. The conventional way of waste management has deteriorated with disastrous results for the environment and society. In the context of smart cities, innovative practices in trash segregation automation using IoT technology are discussed in this study. This research critically analyzes the social, ethical, and environmental implications of these systems while also focusing on a human-centered perspective, rather than only technical considerations. Besides covering the inherent limitations and challenges, it also provides a comprehensive examination of the intelligent algorithms, field-level implementations, and technology background of IoT-based automated trash segregation. In this last chapter, we elaborate on future directions and policy suggestions for all stakeholders to create an enabling environment for the adoption of more sustainable waste management practices and, in turn, cleaner, healthier, and liveable urban environments.***
***Keywords: Internet of Things (IoT), waste management, automation, waste segregation, smart cities, recycling, sensors, machine learning, sustainability, circular economy, environmental impact, social implications.***

## I. INTRODUCTION

The crap in the world is exponentially rising from the late twentieth century and into the twenty-first due to population increase, urbanization, and changes in consumption patterns. The issue essentially refers to the city as a center of economic activity and a densely populated land. According to the World Bank, global trash generation is expected to rise by some 70% by the year 2050 to some 3.4 billion tonnes annually [1]. This threatens public health, urban wells, and environmental compatibility. Such harmful and hazardous techniques typically rely on burning, deposition, and open damping. Unhealthy water and filthy soil, along with greenhouse gases which ensure an all-round threat of climate change, have been incorporated in many developing countries [2]. Even though ... that makes controlled commodities available, it greatly added its share to global warming through methane emissions and the appropriation of prime land [3]. Destruction reduces waste volume, but introduces toxic pollutants and air pollution [4].

These networks are quite inefficient and a hazard to the environment. Collective planning could just throw a fleet of trucks parked idle, burning fuel, and raising pollution levels. Uncollected waste would mean pollution, overfilled containers, and health hazards. Routing optimization and resource use are both impeded by the limitations of real tracking and database planning, which lead to greater costs and efficiency losses. The systems interface with networked and smart devices to facilitate real-time optimization of intelligent sorting and collection monitoring. Not only does this modern concept make the circular economy possible, but it also increases operational efficiency by recycling or reusing resources. This will discuss some of the major technologies, intelligent algorithms, and practical applications, while also taking into account possible disadvantages and moral dilemmas. The ultimate purpose is to provide a thorough understanding of how IoT applications may affect garbage management and sustainable urbanization. The waste classification, which will identify purposes and disadvantages.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW: EVOLUTION OF WASTE MANAGEMENT AND THE RISE OF SMART TECHNOLOGIES

Different societies have changed in their religion, technologies, and concerns for the environment. Because of the increased levels of waste generation, businesses modified their methods from traditional means of waste disposal, like open dumping and burning, to industrial and emergence collection systems.

On the contrary and also because of the immense upsurge in waste generation in the 20th and 21st centuries, conventional methods appeared constrained, thereby demanding sustainable intelligent modern solutions fast. A standard norm was set, known as open damping, which further destroyed the environment and posed health risks. To make things worse, the topic is escalated by news from the Industrial Revolution, which carried mass production and consumption hence organized collecting systems that are otherwise destructive to environmental health as usually waste disposal. Statute-making, such as the US Resource Management and Request (RCRC) [5], have eased resource reduction, recycling, and recovery. Quite important recycling efforts have not been so effective due to faults like poor turnout contamination, and ineffective separation. Manual segregation, in particular just too inconvenient, is very costly, prone to errors, and has variable quality. Nowadays, using networked sensors and equipment, smart systems are connecting to real data such as waste composition and levels of fill in bin. The optimum means of sorting, recycling, and aggregation are in the hands of the citizenry. Ultrasonic sensors installed in Singapore and Amsterdam mitigate emissions plus fuel consumption with dynamic route optimization [6]. Smart bins improve resource allocation and reaction times with real-time data gathering [7]. Though some of its material recovery facilities (MRFs) include automated sorting, setting up the separation of waste at home has not gained enough traction. Interfacing platforms/hardware from different vendors for carrying out different kinds of experiments would end up yielding unrealistic results and compatibility problems. Applications and interfaces often fall short in investigating the behavioral challenges, ethical challenges, and societal challenges that lay at the deeper end. Data protection, the effect on the employment of waste workers, and public trust on the emerging technology should also be addressed more systematically in design and implementation. Not just a critical examination of the social, ethical, and ecological issues but also an in-depth look into the sophisticated IoT sensor components pertaining to algorithms and communication protocols for machine learning. This paper sets out a direction for the community and stakeholders towards a smarter, more equitable and sustainable waste system combined with real-world success case examples and implementable methods.

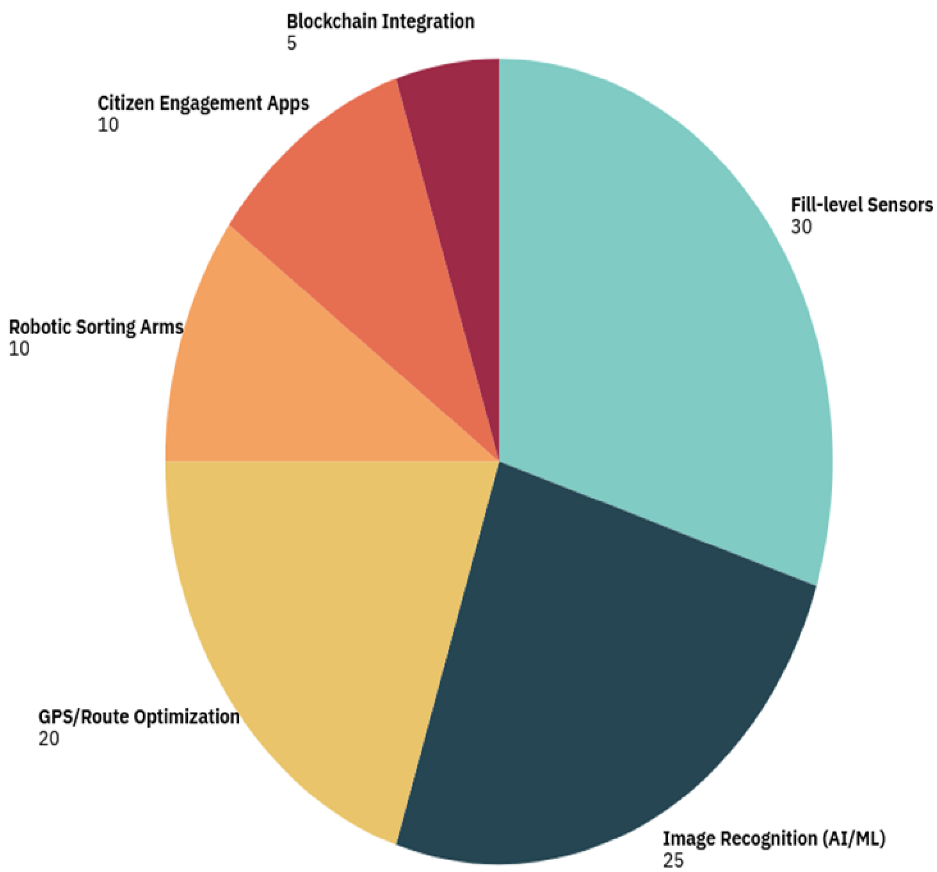


Figure 1 Types of Smart Technologies Used in Waste Management (as of 2024)

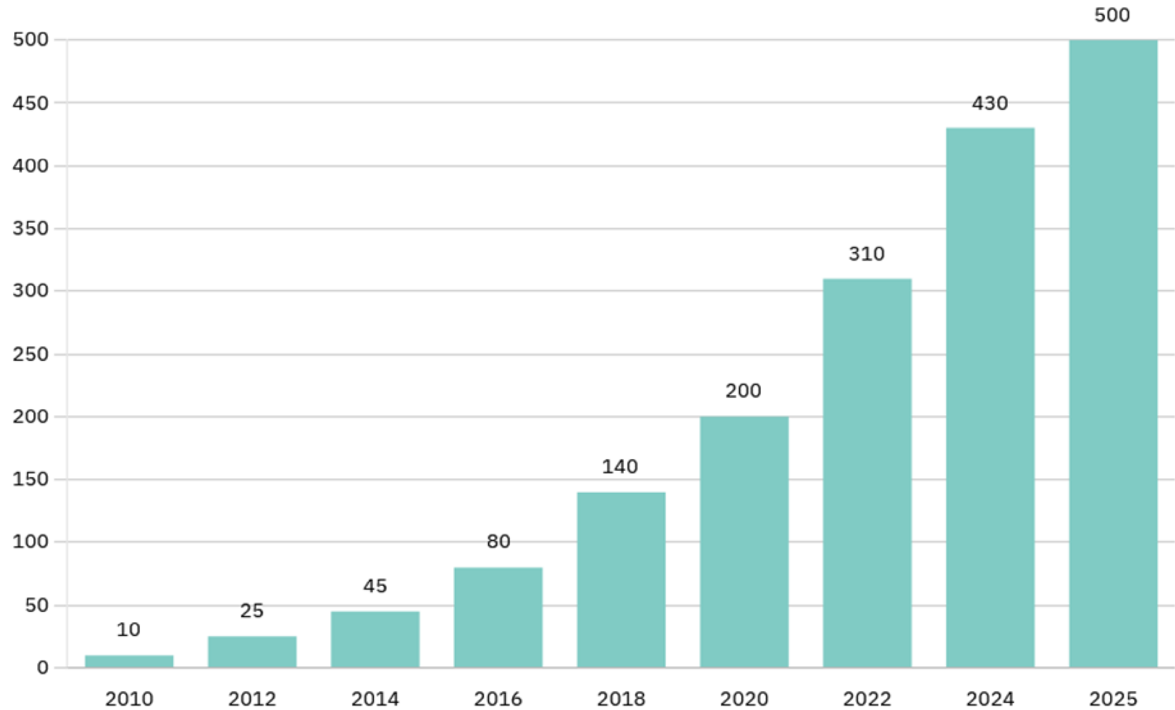


Figure 2 Growth in Cities Using IoT Waste Management Solutions (2010–2025)

## III. TECHNOLOGICAL PILLARS OF AUTOMATED WASTE SEGREGATION

The automation of waste separation systems presents new challenges for smart cities in its implementation, creating interdependence with some of the main technology pillars present. These pillars assist with the accurate and efficient sorting of waste materials so that the conventional view of waste management is transformed into an automated, data-driven, and eco-friendly one. In this section, an elaborate elucidation of these technological pillars together with their individual functions and collective contributions to the system is presented.

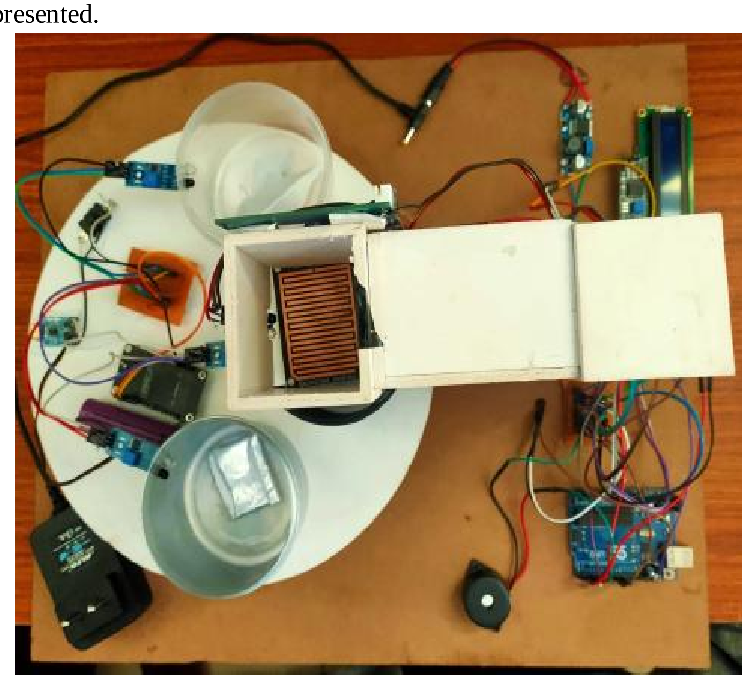

Figure 3 Prototype setup of an IoT-based automated weather monitoring and alert system integrating sensors for rain detection, humidity, and temperature, controlled via Arduino.

### A. *Intelligent Sensors for Waste Identification and Monitoring)*

The automated waste management system relies on smart sensors to differentiate waste types, to classify them, and to handle either waste or precision waste. These sensors use different types of technology to enable the easy recognition of different types of materials. They act as the system's eyes, noses, and hands. Camera and computer vision, namely fish networks (CNNS), handle image recognition on sensors. Transfer and deep learning have made them extremely accurate even in difficult conditions such as partial occlusion and low illumination [8]. A certain wavelength will produce an absorption or reflection by any given material, which characterizes the material with a spectral signature. In this respect, infrared sensors are well trained to differentiate between several polymers that, although appear similar, are chemically different and thus require different recycling procedures [9]. They can also efficiently assist in differentiating various non-ferrous metals (copper, aluminium, etc.) with iron-based metals [10]. It also aids in minimizing fuel consumption and overflow while maximizing collection methods [11]. Processing of the collected real-time data by an inbuilt microcontroller lays out a path toward intelligent data-controlled waste

### B. *Microcontrollers for Data Processing and Control*

Under microcontrollers are grouped all mechanical devices that act as "brains" for an automated waste regulation system, process inputs and manage sensor sorting. These are intended to serve as miniature efficient computers and ensure that you perform what you commit to in real life. Perfect for learning concerning waste projects and prototyping basic models [12]. It does great for really challenging tasks such as image processing, machine learning, and system monitoring, as it has more computation power [13].

These microcontrollers have automated waste regulation systems and collect sensor input, and processing uses them from the mechanical components that act as "brains". Microminiaturization and efficiency in a computer should ensure that all actions contracted in real life are really and faithfully performed. Great for learning waste projects and prototyping simple modules [12]. It does well for those difficult tasks such as image processing, machine learning, and system monitoring as more computational power is available [13].

Suited for garbage disposal systems based on the Internet of Things requiring wireless connectivity via remote servers or cloud platforms [14]. For instance, once a microcontroller detects an item as a plastic bottle, it may onboard the servo motor to divert its path to an appropriate recycling compartment. To acquire data from several sensors, carry out an initial analysis, and send the processed data to a centralized controller or cloud platform for further investigation, reporting, and visualization.

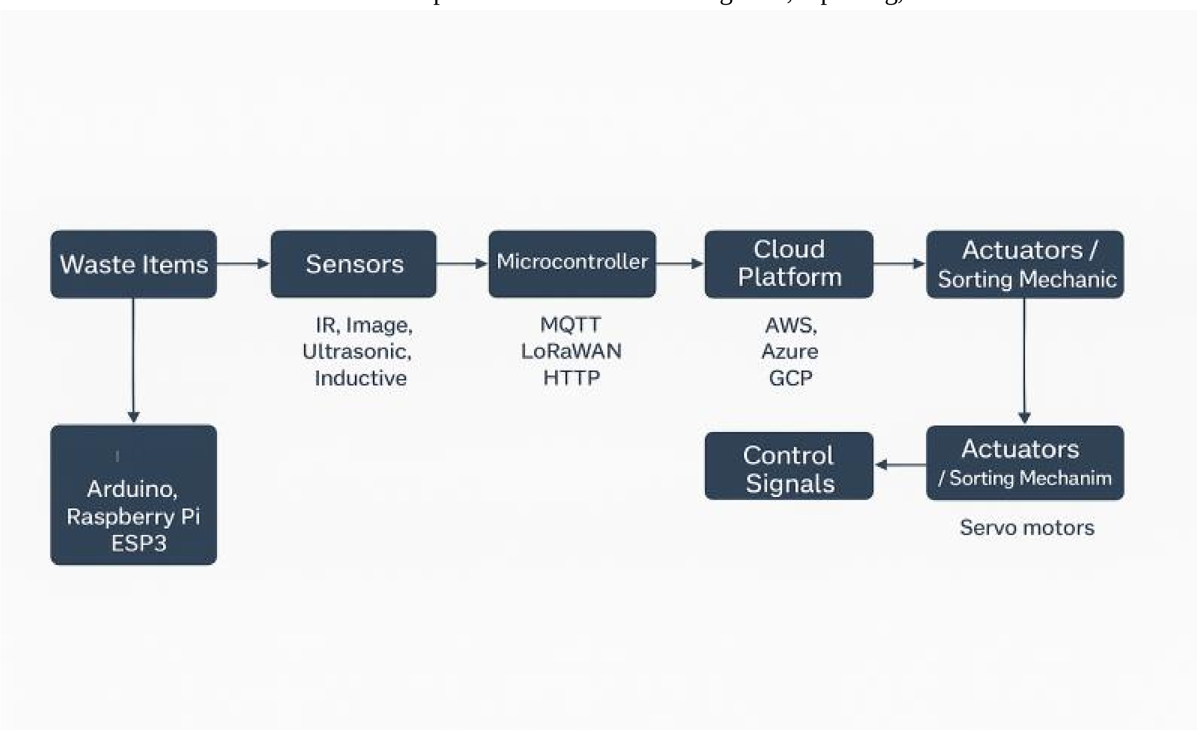


Figure 4 A visual representation showing how different types of waste are detected and classified by specific sensors in an automated segregation system.

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### *C. Data Transmission Protocols*

In an IoT waste auto-regulation system, effective and reliable data transmission is essential. To transfer data from sensors to microcontrollers or central servers or to a cloud platform, it employs a number of communication protocols. Transfer distance and data instalment requirements, service consumption, and price consideration all factor into the protocol choosing process. Some of the common protocols are the following:

1. MQTT (Message Queuing Telemetry Transport): A lightweight public messaging protocol, MQTT is often utilized in Internet of Things applications due to its credentials of being a robust intermediary when sending sensor data from resource-laden devices for unstable networks or bandwidth and efficient news delivery aspects [15].
2. HTTP (HyperText Transfer Protocol): HyperText Transfer Protocol is the used standard of Internet data transfer. It has been in place to transfer data to/from websites and can also be used to transfer data from IoT devices to servers. However, it generally is more resource-consuming than MQTT and may not serve all applications for take-off management [16].
3. Long Range Bidding Network (LORAWAN): The network protocol which is giving little performance low power facility for long duration communication. Sensors should be placed as much isolated from each other location like A city scattered setup [17].
4. Cellular Networks (4G, LTE, 5G): High order subscription line connection gives high bandwidth to transmit even bulk data pictures to download movies from image-labelling sensors. Though promising consistent connections, cellular communication can be more expensive and demanding than other options [18].

### *D. Cloud Platforms for Data Management and Analytics*

The platform enables specific storage, processing, and analyzing facilities to be provided in order to make enormous data collected by automated waste management systems using data from the IoT usable. , Furthermore, the platforms have overtaken the old local solutions in more than a number of ways, which include:

1) Scalability: Cloud platforms can scale compute and storage resources based on needs. It is because of this that in the waste treatment system, a lot of data is produced and tends to vary from time to time.
2) Access: Data stored on the cloud allows one to access his or her internet from anywhere. This greatly helps in scheduling and monitoring of waste control systems anywhere.
3) An economical service: For most applications, the cloud platforms would often give that leanest cost model on a pay-as-you-use basis by removing the need to incur costs in hardware and software before using it.
4) Augmented Analytics: The cloud platform provides several toolkits and services for data analytics, including business intelligence, data visualization, and machine learning, designed to bring out valuable insights from your data. AWS IoT Core is a managed cloud platform that makes it simple and safe to connect IoT devices and other devices to cloud apps. It makes it easy for news routing, data absorption, and device management [19].
5) Azure IoT Hub: This managed service acts like an intermediary news hub that allows two-way communication features between IoT applications and managed devices. It adds scalability features, the safety net, and device regulations [20].
6) 6.Google Cloud IoT Platform: This is a managed service that is meant for connecting global devices for tracking and managing data from them. It is connected with Google's other cloud services to [], facilitate both machine learning and data processing.Buffered Sensor data can also be stored in a cloud-based database. Here, one can access information governing master production patterns, compositions, and trends to garner very useful knowledge. Waste management principles can be guided by this information, which may also provide ways to improve the efficiency of sorting and routes of waste survivability in the event of an incident. Cloud-based machine learning algorithms can analyze datasets to optimize performance in systems developed for waste control.

## IV. INTELLIGENT ALGORITHMS FOR WASTE CLASSIFICATION

Automatic waste control systems are based on intelligent algorithms, mainly those that rely on machine learning, to correctly classify waste and establish decisions on its sorting. These algorithms improve with time and use; therefore, the system is able to cope with the peculiarities and varietal characteristics of actual waste streams. The various methods of machine learning waste categorization shall be discussed in this chapter along with their relative merits, demerits, and constraints towards high accuracy within this realm. This approach trains the algorithm using a labeled data record, whereby each given data point (such as an image of a waste item) belongs to a specified class (such as plastic, paper, glass, etc.). The technique designs an algorithm for predicting novel, unobserved classes of data points by learning to detect the most relevant features in various classes of data points. Several machine learning techniques, each with its advantages and disadvantages, are employed in trash classification.

Convolutional neural networks (CNNs): Various other deep-learning algorithms have been demonstrated to be efficient concerning image recognition problems, but CNNs provide good feature extraction-from-images capabilities like shape, edges, and texture. Therefore, it is specifically applicable for the classification of waste based on its external characteristics [22]. It adapting to varying object orientation, illumination, and closure implies that it would be even more so to the actual garbage-related problems today. Nevertheless, substantial labeled physical resources are required and expensive mathematical techniques to train CNN. Identification of the most appropriate hyperbend to separate the data points in the high-dimensional space corresponding to the different categories through operations is an essential feature of SVM. SVM is efficient for distinguishing among the uses that are needed to separate the data clearly; kernel functions can be used to learn the nonlinear relationships between features [23]. Certainly SVM cannot work effectively with very large data records and is very sensitive to what kernel and parameters are used. This includes different bits of random data and attributes to train each model tree, the prediction from which collectively contributes to the total prediction. Well, based on importance of attributes, random forests hold data in the numerical and categorical values and are not sensitive to neither noise nor outliers [24]. However, random forests might not give the same level of precision achieved by a CNN with respect to complex image recognition applications, and they may also become quite computationally expensive with very large amounts of data. On the other hand, while SVM or random forests are better suited for simpler classification jobs and situations with low computational resources, CNN has proven to be superior in terms of performance as compared to image-based waste categorization. Materials can be a blend between infrared spectra, while random forests can also be used to concatenate data from several sensors. Waste materials may be in closed, damaged, or polluted state, and may differ in size, shape, color, or condition. The classification system needs to be re-tuned and updated, since new waste kinds may appear over time. Some of the methods that will be considered by the researchers in addressing the above challenges include the following: The Data Augmentation scheme is the generation of new training data through wide variations to pre-existing pictures such as rotation, scaling, cutting, and noise addition. Increasing and diversifying training input is an essential application of scaling which contributes to giving models in classification more robustness and greater generalization capabilities. In most cases, this model trained to extract valuable features from photos through exposure to a training set can now transfer to other applications with little further training. Transfer learning is therefore capable of greatly reducing the amount of labeled data and training time needed to classify trash. Ensemble methods will have various strengths and weaknesses in their models that will not only lessen the chances of overadaptation but also offer strength to the classification system produced.

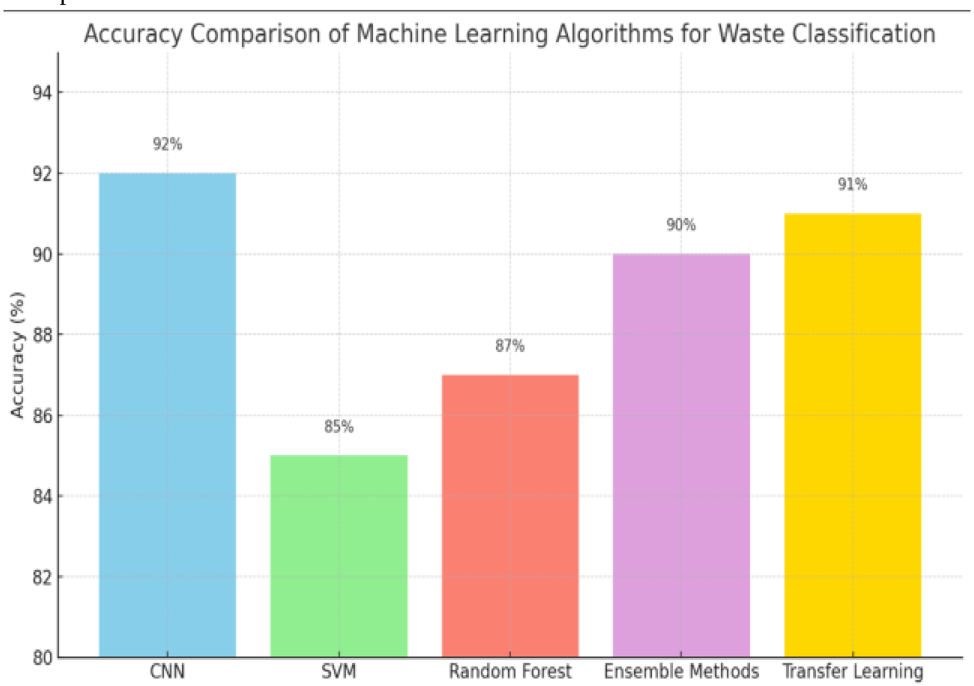


Figure 5 Accuracy comparison of intelligent algorithms used for waste classification. CNN achieves the highest accuracy due to its advanced image feature extraction capabilities, followed by Transfer Learning and Ensemble Methods. SVM and Random Forest provide moderately high accuracy, suitable for simpler tasks or limited-resource environments.

## V. REAL-WORLD IMPLEMENTATIONS IN SMART CITIES

Very well justified, the development of an IoT-based automated waste control system is both the smartest means and the mission of the smart city, which is to make urban life more enjoyable using different technologies. Many nations have undertaken activities along these lines by establishing modern waste collection transformation practices through these systems. This segment undertakes the case studies on different specific technologies and approaches used in smart cities, appraises their successes and failures, and pulls out lessons learned for future developments. The National Environment Agency (NEA) has a sensor network in the city trash cans to monitor real-time filling levels [25]. This data is used for fuel savings, reducing trips, and optimizing the group itinerary. For boosting the efficiency of recycling, Singapore employs state-of-the-art MRFS automation for sorting using technologies like robotic arms and optical sorters. The remarkable success achieved on the part of Singapore with regard to technology and innovation has made it one of the highest recycling rates in Southeast Asia. Underground rubbish bins fit with filling and sending data to a central management system have already been set up in the city the new technology enables emissions reduction traffic improvement and dynamic collection planning [26]. Public awareness-raising initiatives and separation from garbage campaigns also contribute to encouraging people's involvement in recycling in Amsterdam.

In furtherance of improving its recycling efficiency, Singapore also adopts state-of-the-art MRFS with automated sorting like robotic arms and optical sorters. Not least due to its innovation and technology, the city-state ranks among the highest in recycling rates within Southeast Asia. Underground refuse bins have been fitted with filling sensors relaying data to a central management system by the city. This technology enables emission reduction and traffic improvement and dynamic collection planning. Public awareness-raising initiatives and separation from garbage campaigns also drive the involvement of individuals in recycling in Amsterdam. Landfilling has been minimal, thanks to the integrated behavior and technology systems in which landfilling becomes a way of life in cities. Copenhagen: One of the cities that championed green urban design is Copenhagen, which bought a smart waste system that helps recover resources and prevent wastes. The city employs smart garbage cans fitted with sensors that monitor fill levels as well as give instant feedback on the part of the citizens that are involved in sorting waste in order to do this very efficiently [27]. This immediate feedback takes down pollution levels and improves the quality of source-separated garbage. Additionally, undergoing advanced data analysis for pinpointing garbage hotspots and optimizing the collection routes is another benefit that Copenhagen enjoys. With that, it is set to become even more efficient in its sustainable waste management system as this will include the approach of involving citizens in decision-making based on data. The authorities of the aforementioned city use waste collection vehicles (radio frequencies) [28] to weigh and identify the type of rubbish collected by residents. The information would be used for households to give tailored feedback on their waste generation habits and possible areas where assistance is needed for improvement. There are also other composting schemes covering a vast area in San Francisco that manage food waste, prevent it from going to the landfill, and turn it into a rich compost for agricultural use.

Most importantly, though, it offers residents fine-tuned review information on their waste generation habits and possible areas where they could use some help. Likewise, San Francisco has a very large array of composting programs that handle food waste from entering the landfills and instead make fine compost out of them for agricultural use.

The city has actually proved the establishment of standards in the management of green garbage through its pledge of a zero-waste city and through its highly advanced technology. The case studies presented How one could try out different combinations with automated waste management systems based on intelligent urban IoT. These technologies and techniques are representative of what different cities might prefer according to their particular settings or priorities and the resources available to them. Still, some subjects recur.

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Robotized Collection and Sorting Processes: Sensors and data analysis are most useful for collecting real-time information on waste composition and generation. All these parameters must be improved in information with trash guidelines, collection routes, and sorting process efficiencies. Intelligent waste solutions function best for small municipalities-behavior change and technology adoption are always tricky and require successful communication and education. However, design thinking, along with Internet of Things-based automated waste control systems in smart cities, has the potential of transforming waste management into sustainable and cost-efficient urban environments. In this study, we introduce a smart home design that brings all the “brains” into one central hub while still using flexible, plug-and-play sensor modules in each room. By having room-level sensors talk to a single control unit, we cut down on extra hardware and streamline how everything works—improving both your comfort and your energy savings.

Our main achievements are threefold: a lightweight network of sensor nodes, a habit-learning algorithm that predicts what you'll do next, and an energy-smart control system that balances efficiency with your personal comfort. Looking ahead, we see exciting possibilities like adding facial or voice recognition, tapping into more powerful AI for deeper personalization, rolling this out in offices or hotels, and even blending edge-and-cloud processing to keep things fast and efficient in real time.

## VI. CHALLENGES AND LIMITATIONS: A BALANCED PERSPECTIVE

However, all the above stated benefits for an automated waste regulation system using IoT should accept and recognize unique challenges and constraints of the implementation. Keeping a prudent and balanced viewpoint on both advantages and disadvantages is very significant for effective management of responsible regulations on new technologies. This section gives an exhaustive discussion of the technical, financial, social, and ethical challenges and constraints of intelligent waste management systems. Interoperability issues arising out of the absence of standard protocols and data formats can seriously hinder the smooth flow of data and the intended functioning of the system. Unauthorized access, breaches, and abuses can have serious consequences, especially where the information infers private data about specific households and businesses.

Even though there are so many benefits derived from such a system, there is a need to admit and recognize the peculiar challenges and constraints of the implementation. It is important to keep a reasonable and appropriate view on both sides-the advantages and disadvantages-for effectively managing responsible regulations of novel technologies. This section exhaustively discusses the range of technical, financial, social, and ethical challenges and constraints of intelligent waste management systems. The interoperability issues due to the nonexistence of standards for both protocols and formats of data could totally inhibit free flow of data for system operation and many other intended functions. Unauthorized access, breaches, and abuses could seriously harm the particular domino effect these might cause, especially when the information infers private data about specific households and businesses. Factors such as dust, humidity and temperature variation, among others, can be regarded as external factors affecting sensors in obtaining erroneous reading and system failure. The reliability of the equipment should be good; that is, it should take usual wear and tear into consideration and function under extreme conditions. The cost of processing, storage, and training staff. The public must comprehend the merits of recycling and source separation and use this system judiciously. Discomfort, ignorance, and resistance to change have an impact on acceptance percentage. Therefore, organizing training and support programs for helping the affected personnel shift to other activates in the waste management division would be the right thing to do. Then these open standards and protocols may be promoted and developed for interoperability among IoT platforms and devices, thus enabling seamless integration and data exchange. Ensuring calibration and maintenance of sensors to sustain maximum accuracy and reliability will minimize the possibility of system breakdowns. Accessibility can ensure that the advantages of automated waste separation are equally accessible, having fully regarded the considerations of every resident.

## VII. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS: TOWARDS SUSTAINABLE AND HUMAN-CENTRIC WASTE MANAGEMENT

This is a study on waste sorting that brings in some ingenuity in the application of IoT technology as an answer to ever-increasing waste challenge human face in waste management. It details the limitations of existing systems for waste development and about the IoT-based approaches which are likely to enhance efficiency and to advocate for circular economy, and also about intelligent algorithms and the choices of data controlling as important aspects. The study has offered a thorough and objective perspective on the promise and limitations of these systems by close examination of theoretical columns, real applications, and particular issues. These systems can potentially improve the safety of employees while also reducing pollution, increasing recycling rates, and cutting down costs to run them by automating the sorting process. Municipalities usually take a better decision for waste, resource, and directory development collection due to real-time information generated from these systems. Moreover, new models of circular economy based on efficient waste management would be able to protect limited resources, mitigate their negative effects on the environment, and generate new business opportunities. This must bring with it standardization, safe security settings, and routine maintenance to sort out the technical problems such as sensor dependability, data security, and system integration. Long-term benefits and environmental savings should be compared against economic factors such as ROI and up-front capital costs. Human education, worker transition assistance programs, and the design of systems integration should be put into gear to address social and morale-related issues which include public acceptability, worker displacement, and equity and fairness.

Some methods include chemically based imaging techniques and hyperspectral imaging. These make waste identification and sorting with maximum accuracy and reliability.

They ensure the traceability and transparency of the waste supply chain while allowing for effective tracking of recyclables and discouraging illegal disposal. All in all, an effective architecture or system in terms of practice.

The paper concludes with an appeal to local government bodies and their industrial interest groups, researchers, and political decision-makers to adopt much more humane and sustainable modes of waste management. Communities would do well to tackle the associated issues and parameters and invest in an IoT-based automated waste management system so that they could minimize waste, conserve resources, and steer everyone toward a cleaner, healthier, and more valued future. The transition to a circular economy, motivated by social conscience and technological advances, creates the enabling environment for developing resilient, equitable, and prosperous community's alongside positive environmental action.

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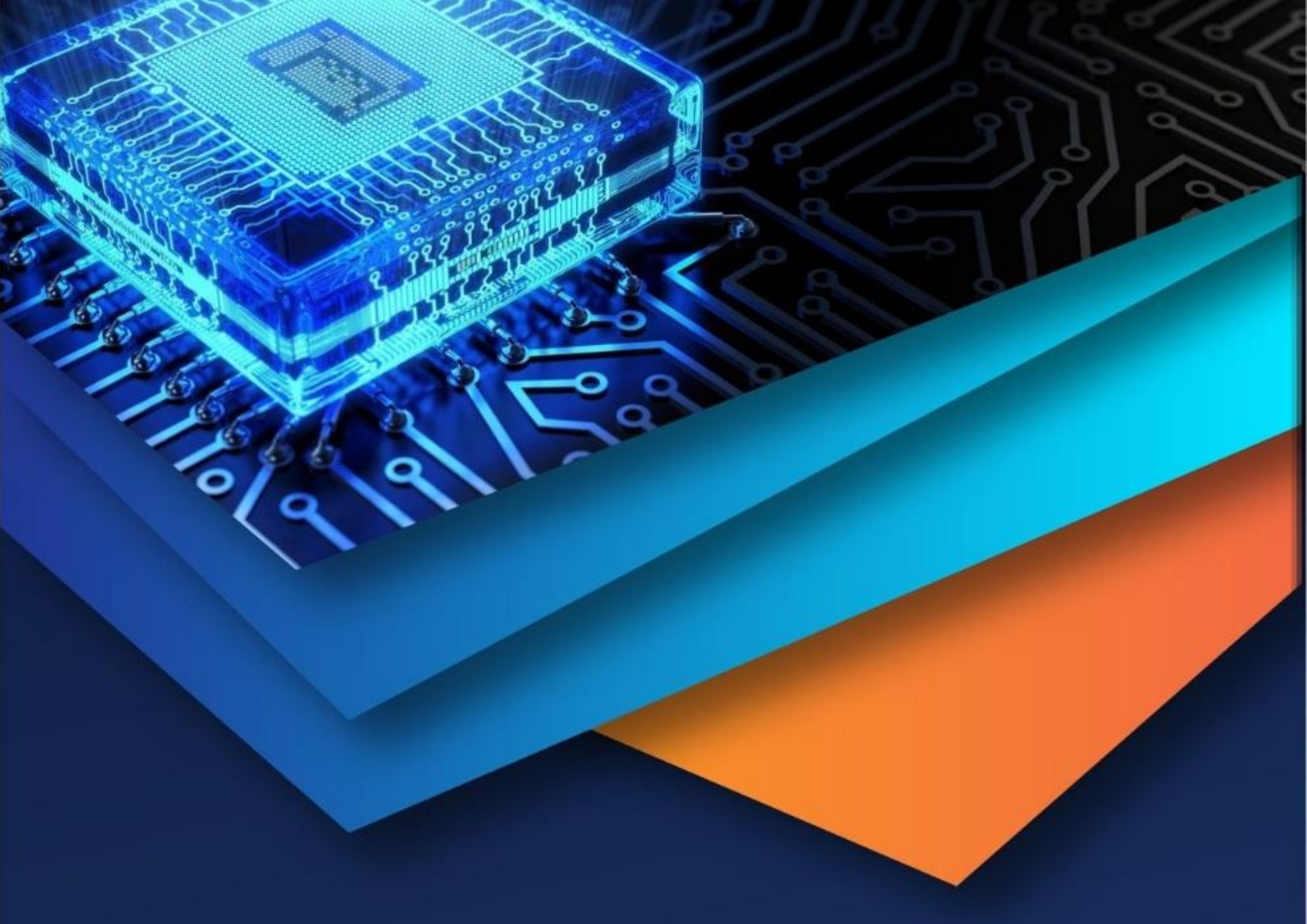


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