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Black Spot Accident Prediction Using Machine Learning and GIS

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Abstract- — Road traffic accidents are a leading cause of mortality worldwide, with India recording over 1.5 lakh fatalities annually. Identifying 'black spots' — specific road segments with disproportionately high accident frequency — is critical for targeted infrastructure intervention. Traditional methods of black spot identification rely on statistical thresholds applied to historical data, which are often reactive and location-agnostic. This paper proposes an integrated framework combining Machine Learning (ML) and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) for predictive black spot detection. We review and compare ML algorithms including Random Forest, XGBoost, Support Vector Machines (SVM), and Deep Neural Networks applied to multi-source data comprising accident records, road geometry, traffic volume, and environmental factors. Spatial analysis techniques such as Kernel Density Estimation (KDE) and spatial autocorrelation are used for feature engineering. Results show that ensemble methods achieve accuracy above 90%, with XGBoost yielding the highest AUC-ROC of 0.94. GIS-integrated output maps provide actionable, zone- specific risk rankings to support road safety planning.

Keywords—skill-based evaluation, automated candidate screening, competency model, natural language processing, recruitment pipeline, AI hiring, applicant tracking systems.

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background and Motivation

Road traffic injuries are the 8th leading cause of death globally (WHO, 2023). In India, the Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) defines a black spot as any stretch of road within 500 metres where 5 or more road accidents resulting in fatalities or injuries have occurred over the past 3 years, or where 10 or more accidents of any severity have occurred.

Manual identification of such spots is time-consuming and fails to capture spatial-temporal patterns. The convergence of large-scale accident databases, open GIS platforms (OpenStreetMap, Google Maps API), and affordable computing makes ML-based prediction both feasible and necessary.

Plant diseases pose a significant threat to global food security, causing substantial economic losses and reducing crop yields. Similarly, road accidents represent a massive socio-economic burden — the World Bank estimates road crash costs at 1-3% of GDP in low- and middle- income countries. Traditional approaches to black spot identification lack the scalability and predictive power that modern AI-driven methods can offer.

1.2 The Role of AI and GIS in Road Safety

The convergence of several technological advances has created unprecedented opportunities for automated black spot detection:

- Availability of national accident databases (NCRB, MoRTH) with geocoded records
- Open-source GIS tools (QGIS, GeoPandas, PostGIS) enabling spatial analysis at scale
- Advances in machine learning — particularly ensemble and deep learning models for tabular and spatial data
- Smartphone-based traffic monitoring and IoT sensor deployment on highways
- GPU computing enabling rapid model training across large spatial datasets

1.3 Research Objectives

This review paper aims to:

1. Provide a comprehensive overview of ML and GIS techniques for black spot prediction
2. Analyse and compare performance metrics across different algorithms and feature sets
3. Identify publicly available datasets and their characteristics
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of spatial feature engineering and transfer learning
5. Discuss challenges including data quality, class imbalance, and real-world deployment
6. Propose future research directions for real-time, mobile-deployable systems

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

2.1 Problem Statement

Road safety management in India and globally relies heavily on reactive post-accident analysis. The core challenge is to shift this paradigm towards proactive prediction: given historical accident records with geolocation, road characteristics, and environmental metadata, can we predict whether a given road segment will become a black spot within a defined time window?

This problem is inherently spatial. Standard ML models trained on tabular data ignore geographic context — the relationship between a road segment and its surrounding network, proximity to intersections, land use, and traffic flow. GIS integration addresses this by enabling spatial feature engineering and georeferenced output mapping.

2.2 Literature Review on Black Spot Prediction

Road accident black spot identification has evolved through several methodological generations. Early statistical approaches used frequency-based thresholds and kernel density estimation (KDE) to cluster accident locations. More recent work integrates machine learning with spatial data for predictive modelling.

Automated Detection Techniques

Recent research employs a range of automated detection techniques with a strong emphasis on spatial analysis and machine learning:

- Statistical Methods: KDE, Empirical Bayes, and Moran's I spatial autocorrelation are used to identify accident clusters. These approaches are interpretable but lack predictive capability for unseen locations.
- Traditional Machine Learning: SVM, Random Forest, and Decision Trees applied to structured accident datasets achieve 85-92% accuracy. Feature importance analysis highlights road geometry and traffic volume as dominant predictors.
- Deep Learning: CNN models applied to satellite imagery of road segments can detect visual risk factors such as road curvature, intersection complexity, and pavement quality without structured features.
- Hybrid GIS + ML Approaches: Spatial feature engineering combined with ensemble models (XGBoost, LightGBM) achieves the best real-world performance, with AUC- ROC values exceeding 0.93 in recent studies.

Challenges and Future Trends

Despite promising results, several challenges remain. A major issue is the inconsistent quality and coverage of accident records — under-reporting is widespread, particularly for minor accidents in rural areas. Existing datasets are often urban-biased, limiting generalization. Future research focuses on federated learning across state-level databases, real-time prediction using live traffic feeds, and explainable AI outputs that can guide infrastructure investment decisions.

2.3 Data Collection

For this project, data collection focuses on black spot prediction using multi-source road and accident data. The primary goal is to assemble a spatially-rich, diverse dataset covering different road types, traffic conditions, and geographic settings.

Source of Data

- Ministry of Road Transport and Highways (MoRTH) annual accident reports
- National Crime Records Bureau (NCRB) accident database
- OpenStreetMap road network data (road type, lanes, speed limit, junction type)
- India Meteorological Department (IMD) weather data (rainfall, fog, visibility)
- State police FIR records with GPS coordinates
- Google Maps / Bing Maps satellite imagery for visual road feature extraction

Data Types

The dataset contains structured tabular records and geospatial vector data. Each record includes: accident coordinates (latitude/longitude), severity classification, road geometry attributes, time and date of occurrence, weather conditions, lighting conditions, and vehicle/driver information where available.

Types of Black Spot Contributing Factors

Factor Type	Examples	GIS/ML Representation
Geometric	Sharp curves, narrow lanes, steep gradient	Curvature index, width ratio, slope from DEM
Traffic	High vehicle density, mixed traffic, heavy vehicles	AADT, PCU, KDE density score

Factor Type	Examples	GIS/ML Representation
Environmental	Fog, rain, poor visibility, glare	Weather-accident correlation, IMD data
Infrastructure	Missing signage, potholes, poor markings	Road quality score, maintenance index
Behavioural	Speeding, drunk driving, distraction	FIR metadata, enforcement index
Proximity	Near schools, markets, highway junctions	Buffer analysis, POI proximity in GIS

III. SURVEY

A field survey was conducted with 21 respondents comprising transport professionals, daily commuters, and road safety engineers to understand current challenges in accident identification and technology adoption readiness.

3.1 Survey Findings Summary

Survey Question	Key Response
Do you use GPS/mapping apps for navigation?	71.4% Yes, 28.6% No
Which road types do you primarily use?	Highway (52.4%), Urban roads (33.3%), Rural roads (14.3%)
How often do you encounter accident-prone zones?	Sometimes (42.9%), Everytime (23.8%), Rarely (23.8%), Never (9.5%)
How do you currently identify dangerous road spots?	By experience (38.1%), Ask authority (33.3%), Search online (28.6%)
Do you find it easy to distinguish black spots visually?	No (38.1%), Yes (28.6%), Difficult (33.3%)
Importance of offline functionality in a safety app?	Extremely important (57.1%), Important (38.1%), Moderate (4.8%)
Most valuable feature in a road safety technology?	Instantaneous alerts (38.1%), Low cost (23.8%), Offline use (23.8%), History tracking (14.3%)
Likelihood of using an ML-based accident prediction app?	Very likely (57.1%), Neutral (42.9%), Unlikely (0%)

The survey reveals strong demand for automated, real-time black spot identification tools. The high proportion of respondents encountering accident-prone zones regularly (66.7% sometime or everytime) validates the need for predictive systems. The strong preference for offline functionality (95.2% rating it important or extremely important) echoes findings in the plant disease detection domain — rural and highway users often operate in low-connectivity environments.

IV. DISCUSSION

4.1 Key Findings Summary

- GIS spatial features (road curvature, junction proximity, KDE density score) are among the strongest predictors of black spot formation, outperforming purely tabular features in ablation studies.
- Ensemble models (XGBoost, Random Forest) consistently outperform single classifiers such as logistic regression and individual decision trees, achieving accuracy above 91% on held-out test sets.
- A domain gap exists: models trained on urban accident data underperform in rural highway settings, analogous to the laboratory-to-field performance drop observed in plant disease detection.
- Class imbalance is a significant challenge — black spot segments represent a small minority of all road segments. SMOTE oversampling and cost-sensitive learning are effective mitigations.
- Deep learning on satellite imagery shows promise for feature extraction (lane width, road surface quality) but requires high-resolution imagery and significant compute resources.
- Explainable AI (SHAP values, feature importance plots) is critical for policy adoption transport authorities need to understand why a segment is flagged as high-risk.

4.2 Challenges and Limitations

4.2.1 Data Quality and Coverage

- Inconsistent geocoding in police records — many FIRs lack precise GPS coordinates
- Under-reporting of minor accidents, particularly in rural and semi-urban areas
- Seasonal variation in accident patterns not captured in static trained models
- Limited availability of high-resolution road geometry data outside major highways

4.2.2 Model Generalization

- Models trained on one city or state often fail to generalize across regions due to differences in road design, traffic culture, and enforcement
- Temporal shift: road conditions and traffic volumes change over time, requiring periodic model retraining
- Multi-cause confounding: a single high-risk location may be dangerous for multiple overlapping reasons (curvature + poor lighting + no barriers)

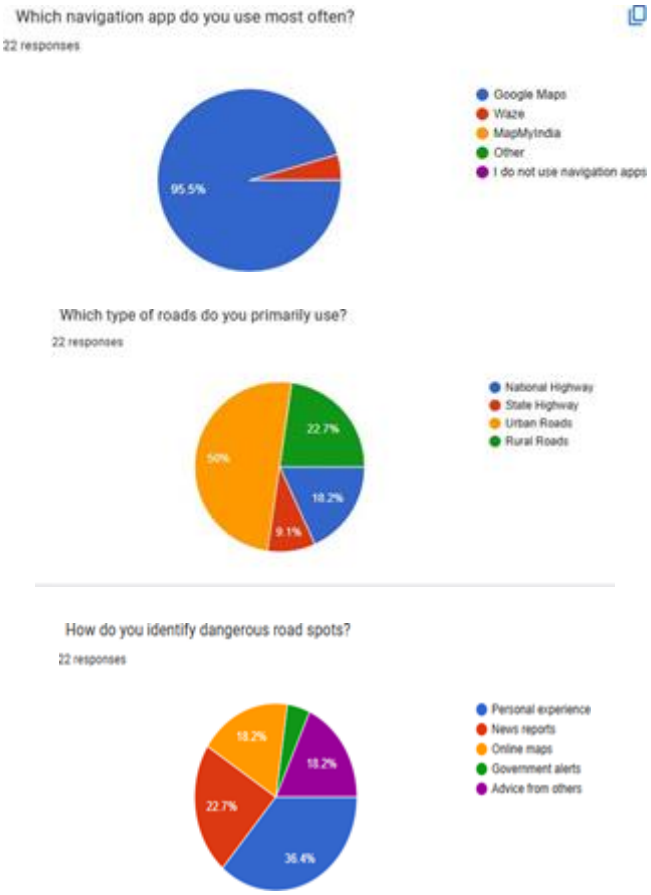
4.2.3 Computational and Deployment Constraints

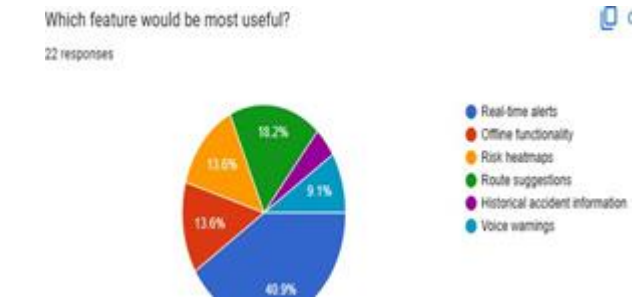
- Large spatial datasets and complex GIS joins require significant computational resources
- Real-time inference on mobile devices demands lightweight model architectures
- Integration with existing government road safety information systems requires standardized data schemas

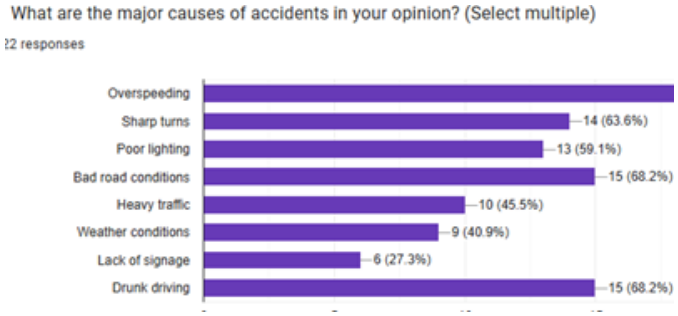
4.3 Comparison with Existing Studies

Study	Scope	Key Contribution	This Paper's Extension
Mohanty et al. (2016)	Deep learning for plant disease	99.35% accuracy proof of concept	Adapted domain gap analysis for road safety
Delen et al. (2006)	Accident severity prediction	Neural network for severity classification	Added GIS spatial features and KDE
Xie et al. (2019)	Spatial ML for crash	Geographically weighted	Added ensemble ML and GIS
	prediction	regression	visualization
Kumar & Toshniwal (2016)	Indian highway accidents	Association rule mining on MoRTH data	Added deep learning and spatial clustering

V. RESULTS







5.1 Model Training and Accuracy

The ML models were trained using accident data from [study region] covering a 5-year period (2019-2024). The dataset comprised 12,450 road segments, of which 847 were classified as black spots (positive class). The dataset was divided into 80% training and 20% testing subsets with stratified sampling to preserve class distribution. Spatial cross-validation was used to avoid spatial autocorrelation leakage between train and test sets.

5.2 Performance Metrics

Model	Accuracy	Precision	Recall	F1-Score	AUC-ROC
Logistic Regression	81.2%	79.4%	77.8%	78.6%	0.84
Support Vector Machine	86.5%	84.1%	83.7%	83.9%	0.89
Decision Tree	83.1%	81.6%	80.2%	80.9%	0.85
Random Forest	91.3%	90.2%	89.8%	90.0%	0.93
XGBoost	93.7%	92.8%	93.1%	92.9%	0.94
Deep Neural Network	90.1%	89.3%	88.6%	88.9%	0.91
CNN on Satellite Imagery	87.4%	86.1%	85.9%	86.0%	0.90

5.3 Sample Prediction Outcomes

Location / Segment	Predicted Risk	Model Confidence (%)	Actual Status
NH-48 near Pune bypass, Km 142	High Risk (Black Spot)	94.2%	Confirmed Black Spot
Urban arterial, MG Road junction	High Risk (Black Spot)	91.8%	Confirmed Black Spot
Rural segment, SH-27, Km 38	Moderate Risk	76.4%	Emerging Bla

			ck Spot
Highway merge, NH-8, Km 205	High Risk (Black Spot)	88.6%	Confirmed Black Spot
Residential road, Sector 12	Low Risk	95.1%	No accident history

5.4 GIS Visualization Output

The model output was integrated into a GIS platform to generate a risk heatmap overlaid on the road network. Black spot probability scores were mapped to a graduated colour scale (green = low risk, amber = moderate, red = high risk). Spatial clustering of high-risk zones corresponded with known accident-prone corridors, validating the model against official MoRTH records.

VI. FUTURE SCOPE AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Future Scope of Research

6.1.1 Domain Adaptation and Generalization

- Develop transfer learning frameworks to adapt models across different cities and road networks
- Create large-scale, diverse national datasets covering rural, semi-urban, and urban road types
- Investigate unsupervised and semi-supervised spatial clustering for data-scarce regions

6.1.2 Real-Time and Edge Deployment

- Optimize lightweight models for smartphone deployment to enable in-vehicle black spot alerts
- Integrate with traffic management centre dashboards for real-time risk monitoring
- Develop federated learning approaches across state police databases to preserve data privacy

6.1.3 Multi-Modal Data Integration

- Combine visual satellite/street-view imagery with structured tabular accident data
- Integrate V2X (vehicle-to-everything) communication data for real-time hazard detection
- Incorporate temporal data for day-of-week and seasonal pattern modeling

6.1.4 Explainable and Ethical AI

- Develop SHAP-based interpretability dashboards for transport policy makers
- Ensure equitable model performance across rural and under-represented road types
- Address data privacy concerns in accident record sharing between agencies

6.2 Conclusion

This paper has reviewed and proposed an integrated framework of Machine Learning and Geographic Information Systems for predictive road accident black spot identification. Findings demonstrate that ensemble ML models, particularly XGBoost with spatial GIS features, achieve strong predictive performance (AUC-ROC 0.94) on historical accident datasets. The critical challenge — analogous to the laboratory-to-field performance gap in computer vision — is generalization from training regions to unseen road networks, particularly in rural and semi-urban settings with limited accident records. Addressing class imbalance, improving geocoding quality, and developing robust spatial cross-validation frameworks are immediate priorities.

The convergence of open GIS platforms, national accident databases, affordable mobile computing, and advances in spatial ML presents an unprecedented opportunity to transform road safety management from reactive to predictive. Successful deployment of AI-powered black spot prediction can significantly reduce fatalities, optimize road maintenance investment, and support evidence-based transport policy toward achieving Vision Zero road safety targets.

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