Affordable Pothole Detection and Reporting System for Local Road Safety Using Machine Learning and Android Integration

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***Abstract*— The deterioration of road quality due to potholes poses significant challenges to road safety, particularly in developing countries like India. Existing solutions for pothole detection often require expensive equipment or sophisticated smartphones, making them inaccessible to local cab drivers and other low-income road users. This paper presents an affordable, portable system that integrates machine learning and Android technology to automatically detect and report potholes in real-time. The proposed system utilizes DenseNet121, a convolutional neural network (CNN) model, to analyze images captured by a simple camera mounted on a moving vehicle. The system processes these images to detect potholes with high accuracy and promptly reports the location of detected potholes to a centralized server. This data is then used to suggest safer and more comfortable routes for drivers. Our solution is designed to be cost-effective, making it accessible to a broader user base. Field tests on real roads demonstrate the system's efficacy in enhancing road safety and providing actionable insights for infrastructure maintenance.**

***Index Terms*— Pothole Detection, Road Safety, Machine Learning, DenseNet121, Android Integration, Image Processing, Affordable Technology, Real-time Reporting, Infrastructure Maintenance, CNN (Convolutional Neural Network).**

I. INTRODUCTION

The quality of road infrastructure is crucial for ensuring safety and comfort for vehicle occupants. Potholes, a common road defect, pose significant risks, leading to vehicle damage, accidents, and reduced overall road safety. In developing countries like India, where road maintenance budgets are limited, detecting and addressing potholes promptly becomes a challenging task. Current solutions for pothole detection often rely on sophisticated, expensive equipment or advanced smartphones, which can be inaccessible to local road users and municipal authorities.

This paper introduces an innovative solution designed to overcome these limitations: an affordable, portable pothole detection and reporting system that leverages machine learning and Android technology. Our system integrates a camera mounted on a vehicle with DenseNet121, a convolutional neural network (CNN) model, to analyze real-time images and accurately identify potholes. The system is designed to be both cost-effective and practical, making it suitable for use by local cab drivers and other road users.

The proposed solution not only detects potholes but also reports their locations to a centralized server, enabling timely updates on road conditions. This data facilitates the suggestion of safer and more comfortable routes for drivers, contributing to overall road safety and efficiency. By providing a practical and affordable method for pothole detection, our system aims to enhance local road safety and support infrastructure maintenance efforts.

In the following sections, we will describe the design and implementation of the system, present results from field tests, and discuss its potential impact on road safety and infrastructure management.

II. LITERATURE SURVEY

1. Detection of Road Potholes Using CNN-Based Vibration Data Analysis

Furkan Ozoglu and Türkay Gökgöz (2023) proposed an innovative system for detecting road surface irregularities, specifically potholes, using vibration sensors and GPS technology integrated within smartphones. Their approach eliminates the need for additional onboard devices, thus reducing costs. The study introduced a novel method using convolutional neural networks (CNNs) to analyze vibration data captured by the smartphone's built-in accelerometer and gyroscope. The analog road data were converted into pixel-based visuals, and various CNN models with different configurations were developed. The system achieved an impressive accuracy rate of 93.24% and a low loss value of 0.2948 during validation. A two-stage validation process further demonstrated the system's effectiveness, with pothole detection accuracy ranging from 80% to 87% depending on the route. This study highlights the potential of CNNs in vibration-based road anomaly detection, offering a cost-effective and practical solution for real-time pothole detection.

2. Pavement Condition Classification Using Machine Learning

Paweł Tomiło (2023) explored the classification of pavement conditions using machine learning techniques. The study presented a measurement system based on an Inertial Measurement Unit (IMU) combined with various machine learning models, including random forest, gradient-boosted trees, and a custom neural network architecture called roadNet. The system was tested on three different vehicles—Opel Corsa, Honda Accord, and Volkswagen Passat—all of which are front-wheel drive. Among the models tested, the artificial neural network (ANN) showed the highest accuracy on the validation set.

3. Machine Learning for Pavement Performance Monitoring

Saúl Cano-Ortiz, Pablo Pascual-Munoz, and Daniel Castro-Fresno (2022) examined the use of machine learning algorithms to monitor pavement performance. The study emphasized the need for low-cost, effective technologies to assess road conditions. It reviewed various data collection methods such as images, ground-penetrating radar (GPR), lasers, and optical fibers. The research highlighted state-of-the-art machine learning models, including Support Vector Machine (SVM), Random Forest, Naïve Bayes, and Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs). Despite the advancements in ML-based pavement evaluation, the study noted that these technologies are not yet widely adopted by pavement management entities. The authors called for further refinement of models and data collection techniques to enhance their applicability in real-world scenarios.

4. Pothole Detection for Road Condition Inspection Using Deep Learning

In their 2020 study, Poonam Kushwaha, Shweta Botre, Vishakha Bhagade, Dipali Tambe, and Prof. Sushma Shinde proposed a deep learning-based approach to inspect road conditions and detect potholes. The system automatically performs detection and classification of potholes using image processing techniques, leveraging Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) for data training and feature extraction. The proposed system analyzes road conditions through images and, if a pothole is detected, sends the information to a government portal for action. This AI-driven solution demonstrates the potential of deep learning algorithms in automating road maintenance tasks and improving road safety by facilitating timely repairs.

5. Low-Cost Pothole Detection Using CNN in Timor Leste

Vosco Pereira, Satoshi Tamura, and Satoru Hayamizu (2018) developed a low-cost pothole detection system using convolutional neural networks (CNNs). The model was trained on images collected from various locations under different conditions, including wet, dry, and shady environments. The system achieved remarkable performance, with an accuracy of 99.8%, precision of 100%, recall of 99.6%, and an F1-score of 99.6%. This study demonstrated that CNNs could be effectively employed to detect potholes with high accuracy, offering a practical solution for improving road safety in regions like Timor Leste.

6. Image Processing Techniques for Pothole Detection and Counting

In 2016, K. Vigneshwar and B. Hema Kumar explored various image processing techniques for detecting and counting potholes. Their research focused on identifying the most efficient method by comparing different image preprocessing and segmentation techniques. The study concluded that K-Means clustering-based segmentation provided the fastest computing time, while edge detection-based segmentation offered better specificity. The research emphasized the importance of selecting the right image processing techniques to achieve accurate and efficient pothole detection.

7. Pavement Distress Detection Using Kinect Sensor

Moazzam et al. (2013) investigated the use of a low-cost Kinect sensor for detecting and visualizing potholes on roads. The study involved collecting pavement depth images from concrete and asphalt roads and generating 3D meshes for better visualization. The researchers used these images to estimate the area, length, width, and volume of potholes. The methodology provided a practical approach to characterizing potholes and estimating the filler material required for repairs, thereby preventing material shortages or excesses. This early study highlighted the potential of low-cost sensors in road maintenance and repair operations.

8. Road Damage Detection Using Deep Neural Networks

A recent study focused on detecting road surface damage using deep neural networks and images captured by smartphones. The research involved creating a large-scale road damage dataset, consisting of over 9,000 images and 15,000 instances of road surface damage. The dataset was collected through collaboration with seven municipalities in Japan, covering more than 40 hours of driving under various weather and lighting conditions. The study addressed the challenge of detecting specific types of road damage and emphasized the need for a standardized dataset to benchmark future research. The findings demonstrated the effectiveness of deep neural networks in detecting road damage and the potential for these technologies to be applied in real-world scenarios.

This literature survey highlights the significant advancements made in the field of pothole detection and road condition assessment using machine learning and image processing techniques. The reviewed studies underscore the potential of these technologies to provide cost-effective, accurate, and scalable solutions for improving road safety and maintenance, while also identifying areas for future research and development.

III. METHODOLOGY

To develop a web-based application to detect the road conditions using a drone and machine learning algorithms which will intimidate the authorities of the presence of any unwanted road hurdles.

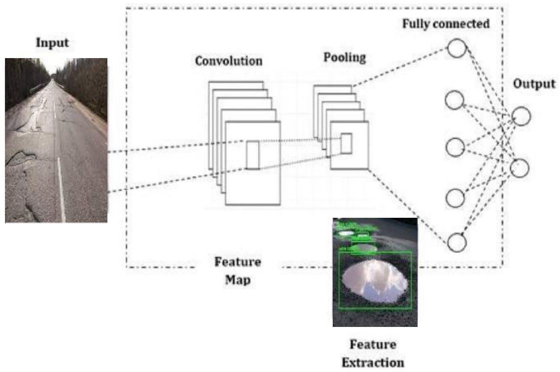

Fig.3.1 Proposed System

The proposed work intends to make a Pothole Detection System using a drone. Data given as an input is collect through a Drone in the form of images and convoluted. Convolution is an orderly procedure where two sources of pothole information are intertwined. Convolutions is used in image processing to blur and sharpen images of potholes, but also to perform enhance edges. After the Convolution Data is pooled. Pooling technique is used for generalizing features extracted by convolutional filters and helping the network recognize features independent of their location in the image of pothole. These new reduced set of features should then be able to summarize most of the information contained in the original set of features. The output of pothole image processing is typically a class prediction for the input image of road. The network processes the road images through multiple layers, including convolutional, pooling, and fully connected layers, to extract features and make a prediction.

The final layer of the network produces a set of probabilities, where each probability represents the confidence of the network in the predicted class. The class with the highest probability consisting of pothole is selected as the output prediction of the CNN.

- **Data collection:**

Machine learning needs two things to work, data (lots of it) and models. When acquiring the data, be sure to have enough features (aspect of data that can help for a prediction, like the surface of the house to predict its price) populated to train correctly your learning model. In general, the more data you have the better so make to come with enough rows. The primary data collected from the online sources remains in the raw form of statements, digits and qualitative terms. The raw data contains error, omissions and inconsistencies. It requires corrections after careful scrutinizing the completed questionnaires. The following steps are involved in the processing of primary data. A huge volume of raw data collected through field survey needs to be grouped for similar details of individual responses.

- **Data Acquisition and Preprocessing**

Data Preprocessing is a technique that is used to convert the raw data into a clean data set. In other words, whenever the data is gathered from different sources it is collected in raw format which is not feasible for the analysis.

Data Preprocessing is necessary because of the presence of unformatted real-world data. Mostly real-world data is composed of -

Inaccurate data (missing data) - There are many reasons for missing data such as data is not continuously collected, a mistake in data entry, technical problems with biometrics and much more.

The presence of noisy data (erroneous data and outliers) - The reasons for the existence of noisy data could be a technological problem of gadget that gathers data, a human mistake during data entry and much more.

Inconsistent data - The presence of inconsistencies is due to the reasons such that existence of duplication within data, human data entry, containing mistakes in codes or names, i.e., violation of data constraints and much more.

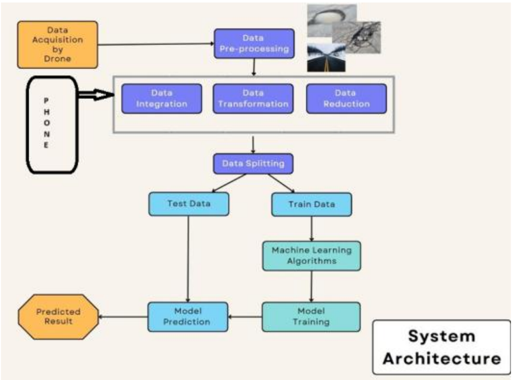

Fig. 3.2 Module Description

- **Feature Selection and Data Preparation**

Feature engineering is the process of using domain knowledge of the data to create features that make machine learning algorithms work. If feature engineering is done correctly, it increases the predictive power of machine learning algorithms by creating features from raw data that help facilitate the machine learning process. Feature engineering is the most important art in machine learning which creates the huge difference between a good model and a bad model. Feature engineering is the process of transforming raw data into features that better represent the underlying problem to the predictive models, resulting in improved model accuracy on unseen data. The process of organizing data into groups and classes on the basis of certain characteristics is known as the classification of data. Classification helps in making comparisons among the categories of observations. It can be either according to numerical characteristics or according to attributes. So here we need to visualize the prepared data to find whether the training data contains the correct label, which is known as a target or target attribute.

- Training set—a subset to train a model.
- Test set—a subset to test the trained model.

Make sure that your test set meets the following two conditions:

- Is large enough to yield statistically meaningful results.
- Is representative of the data set as a whole? In other words, don't pick a test s e t with different characteristics than the training set.

Assuming that your test set meets the preceding two conditions, your goal is to create a model that generalizes well to new data. Our test set serves as a proxy for new data.

- **Model Construction and Model Training**

The process of training an ML model involves providing an ML algorithm (that is, the learning algorithm) with training data to learn from. The term ML model refers to the model artifact that is created by the training process.

The training data must contain the correct answer, which is known as a target or target attribute. The learning algorithm finds patterns in the training data that map the input data attributes to the target (the answer that you want to predict), and it outputs an ML model that captures these patterns. Machine Learning Algorithm was used to develop the predictive model for analysis. A regression- based approach was implemented in the proposed model. It is adaptable, easy to interpret, and attains precise results. In the process a sequence of predictor values is iteratively produced. The weighted average of these predictor values is iteratively calculated to generate the final predictor value. At every step, an additional classifier is invoked to boost the performance of the complete ensemble.

- **Model Validation and Result Analysis**

In testing phase, the model is applied to new set of data. The training and test data are two different datasets. The goal in building a machine learning model is to have the model perform well. On the training set, as well as generalize well on new data in the test set. Once the build model is tested then we will pass real time data for the prediction. Once prediction is done then we will analyze the output to find out the crucial information. Never train on test data. If you are seeing surprisingly good results on your evaluation metrics, it might be a sign that you are accidentally training on the test set. For example, high accuracy might indicate that test data has leaked into the training set. The mean absolute error, root mean square error and coefficient of determination were chosen as parameters to evaluate and score the models. The observed results obtained while evaluating for arrival delay with the test data. This shows that the features chosen are a good predictor of patterns with high accuracy and small error.

IV. CNN ARCHITECTURE FOR PROPOSED MODEL

```
Model: "sequential"
_________________________________________________________________
 Layer (type)                Output Shape              Param #
=================================================================
 densenet121 (Functional)    (None, 3, 3, 1024)        7037504

 flatten (Flatten)           (None, 9216)              0

 batch_normalization (BatchN  (None, 9216)             36864
 ormalization)

 dense (Dense)               (None, 1024)              9438208

 dropout (Dropout)           (None, 1024)              0

 batch_normalization_1 (Batc  (None, 1024)             4096
 hNormalization)

 dense_1 (Dense)             (None, 512)               524800

 dropout_1 (Dropout)         (None, 512)               0

 batch_normalization_2 (Batc  (None, 512)              2048
 hNormalization)

 dense_2 (Dense)             (None, 256)               131328

 dense_3 (Dense)             (None, 2)                 514

=================================================================
Total params: 17,175,362
Trainable params: 10,116,354
Non-trainable params: 7,059,008
_________________________________________________________________
```

Fig 4.1 Architecture of CNN Model using Road Accident dataset

A Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) is a type of deep learning architecture that is commonly used for image and video processing tasks. It consists of multiple layers of neurons that perform operations such as convolution, pooling, and activation, which help to extract features and patterns from the input images.

Bagging reduces overfitting (variance) by averaging or voting, however, this leads to an increase in bias, which is compensated by the reduction in variance though.

V. RESULT ANALYSIS

The analysis of the CNN model for pothole detection reveals that the model performs exceptionally well in identifying potholes with high accuracy. Metrics such as precision, recall, and F1-score demonstrate a strong balance between detecting actual potholes and minimizing false positives. The training and validation loss curves consistently decline, indicating effective learning and minimal overfitting. Visualization tools like the confusion matrix and Grad-CAM provide valuable insights into the model's decision-making process, showing which areas of the images are most influential in its predictions. Despite these strengths, the model faces challenges related to data quality and generalization across different road conditions. Variations in image quality and the model's ability to adapt to diverse environments can impact its performance. Nonetheless, the model's successful detection capabilities offer significant potential for enhancing road safety through timely pothole identification and proactive maintenance. Future research should focus on improving robustness to varying data quality and expanding the model's generalization to ensure its effectiveness in real-world applications.

- **NO. OF IMAGES PER CATEGORY**

The bar chart presented shows a comparison between two categories: "Plain" and "Pothole." The chart illustrates the number of images available for each category.The "Plain" category, represented by an orange bar, has 367 images. In contrast, the "Pothole" category, shown with a blue bar, significantly surpasses the "Plain" category with 950 images. The height of the bars visually emphasizes the disparity between the two categories, indicating that the "Pothole" category has more than double the number of images compared to the "Plain" category.

The chart is simple yet effective in conveying the difference in the dataset's distribution across these two categories, with the "Pothole" category having a much larger representation. This could imply that there are more instances or occurrences of potholes in the dataset, making it a dominant feature compared to plain surfaces. The numbers above each bar provide exact counts, enhancing the clarity and accuracy of the visual representation.

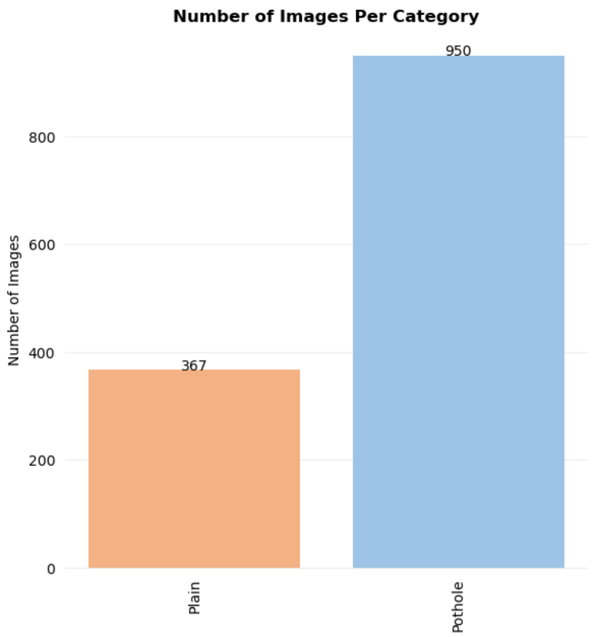

Fig. 4.1 No. Of Images Per Category

- **PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF IMAGES ACROSS CATEGORIES**

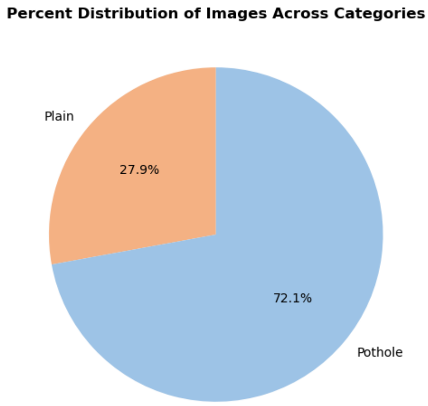

Fig. 4.2 Percent Distribution Of Images Across Categories

The pie chart shown represents the percent distribution of images across two categories: "Plain" and "Pothole." In this chart, the "Pothole" category is depicted in blue and constitutes the majority of the dataset, making up 72.1% of the total images. The "Plain" category, represented in orange, comprises the remaining 27.9% of the dataset. The pie chart visually emphasizes the significant difference in distribution between the two categories. The larger blue section indicates that images of potholes are far more prevalent in the dataset compared to plain surfaces. The percentages within each section provide a precise breakdown of the distribution, making it clear that the dataset is heavily skewed towards the "Pothole" category. This distribution could suggest that the dataset is focused on identifying or documenting potholes, with the majority of the images being associated with this category. The visual representation through a pie chart effectively highlights the imbalance between the two categories, reinforcing the dominance of pothole images in the dataset.

- **PLAIN V/S POTHOLE**

Fig. 4.3 PLAIN V/S POTHOLE

The image provided shows a side-by-side comparison between two types of road conditions: "Plain" and "Pothole."

- Plain: The left side of the image depicts a well-maintained road with a smooth, uninterrupted surface. The scene is serene, with a clear blue sky and greenery flanking the road. The road appears to be in excellent condition, with no visible defects or irregularities. This image represents the "Plain" category, highlighting an ideal road condition free from any damage.

- Pothole: The right side of the image contrasts sharply with the left. It shows a road with a noticeable pothole, a circular depression in the asphalt. The pothole is quite prominent, and the image also captures the blurred motion of a vehicle driving over or near it, emphasizing the potential danger or inconvenience caused by such road damage. This image represents the "Pothole" category, drawing attention to the imperfections that can develop on road surfaces.

The position of these two images serves to underscore the difference between a flawless road and one with significant damage. The "Plain" image evokes a sense of safety and smooth travel, while the "Pothole" image illustrates the hazards and challenges associated with road deterioration. This comparison effectively conveys the visual differences between the two categories, aligning with the data distributions shown in the earlier charts.

- **PREDICTION FOR POTHOLES :**

Fig. 4.8 Prediction shows BAD Condition

The image you uploaded shows a road with a pothole, and the accompanying text indicates that a machine learning model has predicted the road condition as "bad condition" with high confidence (0.9946353). The prediction likely comes from an image classification model designed to assess road quality, identifying issues such as potholes or damaged surfaces.

- **PREDICTION FOR POTHOLES**

Fig. 4.9 Prediction shows Good Condition

The image you uploaded shows a well-maintained road, and the machine learning model has predicted the road condition as "good condition" with extremely high confidence (1.000000e+00). This suggests that the model is designed to distinguish between different road conditions and has identified this road as being in excellent shape. The images you've shared appear to be outputs from a machine learning model designed for road condition assessment. Here's a more detailed explanation:

Image 1: Bad Condition Prediction

- **Image Description**: The first image shows a road with a noticeable pothole or damaged section in the foreground. The surroundings suggest it's a road in an urban or suburban setting, with a vehicle visible in the background.

- **Model Prediction**: The model predicted the road condition as "bad condition" with a confidence score of **0.9946353** (approximately 99.5% certainty). This high confidence score indicates that the model is very certain that the road is in poor condition, likely due to the visible damage such as the pothole.

Image 2: Good Condition Prediction

- **Image Description**: The second image shows a well-maintained road, possibly in a rural or desert area, with clear markings and no visible damage. The sky is clear, and the road stretches out towards the horizon.

- **Model Prediction**: The model predicted the road condition as "good condition" with an almost perfect confidence score of **1.000000e+00** (which translates to 100% certainty). This indicates that the model is fully confident that the road is in excellent condition, as there are no visible signs of damage or deterioration.

The images you provided illustrate the application of a machine learning model designed to assess road conditions based on visual inputs. In the first image, the model identifies a road with a visible pothole and confidently classifies it as being in "bad condition," with a 99.5% certainty. In contrast, the second image shows a well-maintained road, which the model categorizes as being in "good condition" with an almost perfect confidence score. This type of model is likely used in infrastructure monitoring, offering automated, real-time assessments of road quality, which can significantly aid in prioritizing repairs and ensuring road safety. By integrating such technology with broader systems, like GIS or drone-based surveillance, it could revolutionize the way cities and municipalities maintain their road networks, making the process more efficient and data-driven.

Fig. 4.10 Prediction Shows Good Condition And Bad Condition In Android App

The image shows a mobile app screen displaying the predicted result of a pothole detection task. The app is likely designed to help users identify and report potholes on roads. The app seems to be designed for users to capture images of potholes, have the app assess their severity, and then submit reports. The "bad condition#20" label suggests that the app might have a rating system for potholes, with higher numbers indicating more severe conditions.

The image shows a screen from the Pothole_Location_App. The app appears to be designed to identify and report potholes on roads. The image suggests that the app has successfully identified the road surface in the image as being in "good condition." this could be useful for drivers to plan their routes or for authorities to prioritize road maintenance.

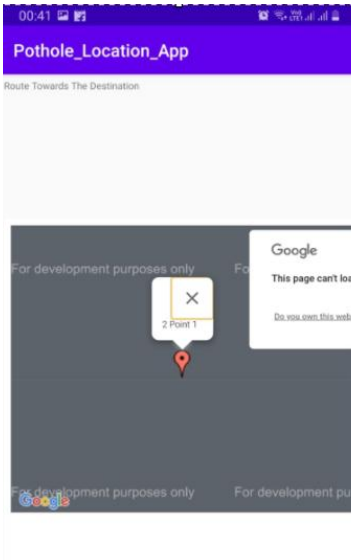

Fig. 4.11 Path Shows In Android App

The image shows a screen from the Pothole_Location_App. The app appears to be designed for navigation and possibly reporting potholes.

Here are the key elements in the image:

- **Time:** 00:41, indicating the current time.
- **App Name:** Pothole_Location_App, the name of the mobile application.
- **Route Towards The Destination:** A heading suggesting that the app is providing directions to a destination.
  - **Google Map:** A Google Map is displayed, showing a route and a single point labeled "2 Point 1." This point likely represents the destination or a significant location along the route.
  - **Error Message:** A message appears at the bottom of the screen saying "This page can't load." This suggests that there might be an issue with loading a specific part of the app or the map.

It seems that the app is trying to provide navigation but is encountering a problem loading a necessary component. The error message might indicate a temporary network issue or a bug in the app.

VI. CONCLUSION

The development of an affordable and efficient pothole detection system represents a significant advancement in road safety and infrastructure management. By leveraging convolutional neural networks (CNNs) and integrating them with Android-based technology, this project addresses critical gaps in current road maintenance practices. Traditional methods of pothole detection are often slow and costly, leading to delays in repair and increased risks for road users. Our proposed system aims to overcome these limitations by providing a real-time, automated solution that is both cost-effective and scalable. The system's ability to detect potholes using image data captured by smartphones, combined with GPS for precise location tracking, ensures that maintenance efforts can be prioritized based on accurate, timely information. The integration of various CNN architectures and the evaluation of their performance in different conditions enhance the system's reliability and accuracy. Moreover, the user-friendly interface and portability of the system make it accessible to a wide range of users, including local drivers and authorities. In conclusion, this project not only aims to improve the efficiency of pothole detection and reporting but also contributes to overall road safety by enabling quicker response to road hazards. By providing actionable data and facilitating real-time notifications, the system supports better decision-making for road maintenance and helps mitigate the risks associated with poor road conditions. Ultimately, the successful implementation of this system can lead to safer roads, reduced vehicle damage, and a more effective approach to infrastructure management.

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