International Journal of Research and Applied Innovations (IJRAI)

| ISSN: 2455-1864 | www.ijrai.org | editor@ijrai.org | A Bimonthly, Scholarly and Peer-Reviewed Journal |

||Volume 7, Issue 6, November–December 2024||

DOI:10.15662/IJRAI.2024.0706012

Adaptive Machine Learning for Resource-Constrained Environments: A Path toward Sustainable AI

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ABSTRACT: The paper concentrates on adaptive machine learning (ML) models targeted at low-power devices, which will turn AI more available and sustainable in resource-limited settings. As the use of AI applications gains more and more popularity in developing areas and edge computing, a lightweight and energy-efficient model is of the primary concern to allow more people to adopt it. This paper examines the different energy-conservation measures, including model pruning, quantization, and edge AI to balance machine learning against accuracy. With the examples of realistic applications, e.g., healthcare diagnostics and smart agriculture, we show how these models can be effectively used within resource-constrained devices. This methodology is based on the assessment of various lightweight models based on performance benchmarks on low-power hardware, energy efficiency, and accuracy. The most important results include that adaptive ML models can achieve substantial energy saving and high-performing results, providing viable solutions to using AI in the low-resource context. These findings substantiate the possibility of sustainable AI to promote technological inclusion on the international scale.

KEYWORDS: Adaptive Machine Learning, Resource-Constrained Environments, Energy Efficiency, Edge Computing, Lightweight Models, Sustainable AI

I. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to the Study

The fast development of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) has radically reshaped the world of the different industries, which has allowed enhancing the processes of automation, healthcare, and finance among others. Nonetheless, the energy consumption of AI models has increased over the years as the models themselves get more complex and capable, especially during training and inference. With the introduction of AI applications to more devices, including smartphones and smart sensors, energy consumption in these systems has become a burning issue (Entezari et al., 2023).

Responding to this, there is an increasing requirement of sustainable AI solutions that can be run in limited resource settings. Such environments, like developing areas or edge computing cases, do not always have the infrastructure needed to execute high-energy-consuming AI models. One of the promising solutions has been adaptive machine learning that manages performance by tuning the complexity of the model to the available resources. Adaptive ML can make AI technologies work in low-power devices without affecting the overall performance because it can use lightweight models, energy-efficient algorithms, and localized processing (Entezari et al., 2023). This would not only lower energy usage, but also extend AI access to underserved places and uses, making AI ecosystem more inclusive and sustainable.

1.2 Overview

Artificial intelligence (AI) has made some remarkable steps over the recent years, and its use is spreading across different industries. Nevertheless, growing complexity of AI models, including deep learning networks has introduced

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significant energy consumption issues (Pimenow et al., 2024). Increasing energy requirements of AI systems, and in particular their use in training large-scale models, have led to environmental concerns, including climate change, and energy efficiency is currently a key topic in the future of AI development.

Even so, among these developments, there is still a significant discrepancy between what AI can do and what it cannot due to the constraints of resources involved in this context. Although in well-equipped environments AI models are very accurate and perform well, they tend to perform poorly in low-power environment where power and computing resources are scarce. This disparity is a hindrance to extensive AI implementation, particularly to developing markets that do not have easy access to powerful infrastructure. On top of this, no single solutions that would deal with the two problems of energy usage and the model precision exist, which is a major challenge in turning AI into a greener option in edge computing (Pimenow et al., 2024). To resolve these concerns, it is necessary to create lightweight artificial intelligence models that can ensure a high level of accuracy, use minimal energy, which will allow the further introduction of AI technologies into low-resource environments.

1.3 Problem Statement

Implementing AI models in low-resource, low-power environments are associated with a couple of difficulties. The balancing of trade-off between the model accuracy and the energy efficiency is one of the primary challenges. The standard AI models usually require much computing power and memory, which is not possible in low-resource settings. Also, such models can perform well with ideal conditions but cannot hold the accuracy given the limited resources. The difficulty, hence, is how to develop lightweight designs that would work well with low-power devices, at the same time providing the best performance and the least amount of energy use. This balance will be important in the adoption of AI in environments where computing resources and energy is limited.

1.4 Objectives

The main goal of the present paper is to explore lightweight machine learning models that can be deployed in resource-constrained settings. These models ought to run on low power devices without compromising on accuracy. The research seeks to examine some of the methods and strategies, including model pruning, quantization, and edge computing, that can be used to maximise energy use with high performance. This study aims to determine the best approaches towards enhancing energy efficiency in AI systems and this process will prove useful in understanding the future of sustainable AI in developing countries and other low-resource countries.

1.5 Scope and Significance

In this paper, the focus is on adaptive machine learning model application to developing regions and edge computing scenarios, where energy efficiency and limited computing resources are an inherent issue. The research examines the application of AI in environments with low infrastructure by concentrating on lightweight and energy efficient models. This study is important as it can prompt the general acceptance of AI in areas that are not fully served by the conventional AI implementations. Furthermore, by creating energy-efficient, sustainable models, the study will also play a role in the globalization of efforts to minimize the environmental impact of AI technologies, as well as provide economic and technological development of resource-deficient regions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Machine Learning in Resource-Constrained Environments

The application of machine learning (ML) on resource-constrained systems is a special problem, mainly because of the constraints in computational power, storage, and energy access. Some AI models have been shaped to work in those types of environments, especially distributed edges, where compute capabilities are commonly dispersed. In context and challenges, Truong et al. (2022) explain that the standard centralized ML models that require large amounts of computational resources are not usually applicable in such environments. Rather, light weight models, which can work effectively in low-resource contexts, are needed. The models are usually highly efficiency in models, making use of optimized algorithms and reducing computational loads in order to operate within the constraints of low-power devices. The scaling mechanisms used include model pruning, low-precision arithmetic and data compression as the most common variable in adjusting these models to work in environments like smart cities or rural environments, where high-performance infrastructure is not always available. Moreover, the models allow processing data in real-time at the edge, eliminating the necessity of continuing data transmission to centralized servers and thereby saving on energy and bandwidth. Therefore, with the further development of AI technologies, there is an urgent necessity to conduct research

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aimed at optimizing the ML models on the edge hardware, allowing the extensive application of AI in the resource-constrained environment (Truong et al., 2022).

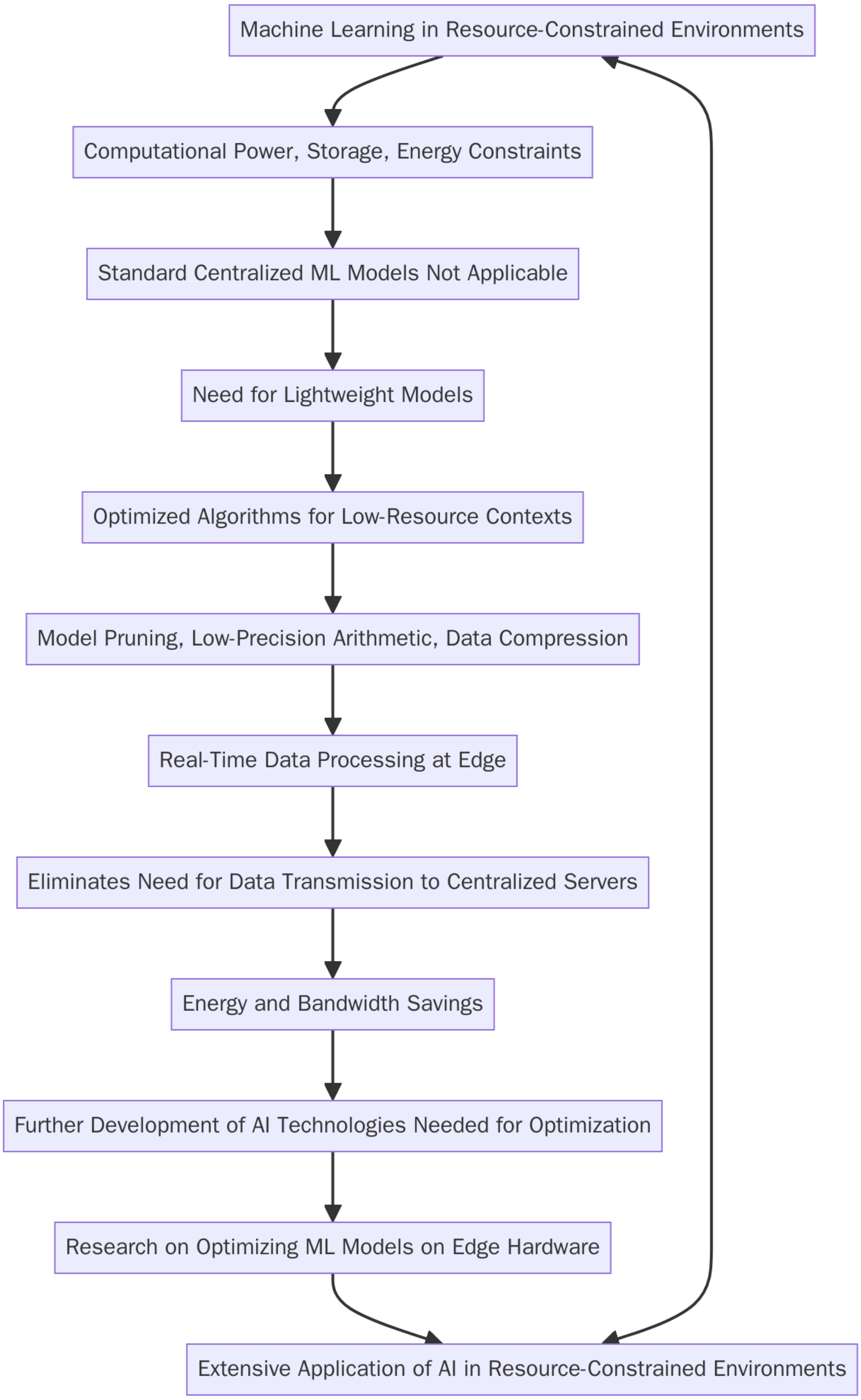

Fig 1: diagram illustrating the flow of Machine Learning in Resource-Constrained Environments.

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2.2 Lightweight AI Models

MobileNet and TinyML are lightweight AI models that use few to no computational resources and thus would be suitable in resource-constrained environments. An example is MobileNet, a network based on depthwise separable convolutions to help minimize the number of parameters and computational complexity without a significant drop in accuracy, which makes it specifically easier to use in mobile and embedded devices. TinyML, however, is a relatively new area that aims at executing machine learning models on small hardware, e.g. microcontrollers with few processing units and minimal memory. Elhanashi et al. (2024) feature innovations in TinyML, a technology that could also make machine learning services accessible to Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, wearables, and embedded systems, which often have serious resource limitations. Although TinyML has greatly influenced the field, it has its downside including the trade-off between the model size and accuracy. The difficulty therefore is to come up with models which are not only small but also can make accurate predictions in real time. Elhanashi et al. (2024) discuss such uses of TinyML as in healthcare, agriculture, and smart city domains, where its small size allows the provision of AI solutions to underserved populations on a scale. These models have shown to be game-changers delivering the computational power required to implement AI technologies in settings that might have not been thought to be compatible with machine learning.

2.3 Machine Learning Algorithms that are energy efficient.

ML algorithms that consume less energy are needed to implement AI in low-power settings, where machines have fewer computational resources and less power. The article by Kumar et al. (2020) discusses the different methods to streamline energy usage in edge AI systems, with a smaller emphasis on model pruning, quantization, or distributed processing. Model pruning is the process of eliminating unneeded weights in a neural network which goes a long way in minimizing the computational load without compromising performance. Another method is quantization, which lessens the accuracy of the weights in the model, enabling to use less memory and calculate it faster, yet at the cost of an acceptable accuracy level. In addition, the authors emphasize the significance of distributed processing, i.e., ML tasks are offloaded to more edge devices, which decreases dependence on centralized cloud servers and lowers energy use. The algorithms are energy efficient and are extremely vital in edge devices, where battery life and energy consumption directly affect the quality of performance and the life of a device. Kumar et al. (2020) also address the trade-offs in optimisation towards energy efficiency including the trade-off between model complexity and energy consumption during training and inference. Further optimization of energy efficient algorithms will be critical to the realization of AI technologies in edge computing, which will make it possible to realize sustainable AI that can be used in resource constrained environments.

2.4 Edge Computing and AI

AI and edge computing are closely related to each other as edge computing delivers the infrastructure required to execute AI algorithms on low-power machines. In edge computing, the data is computed nearer to the source and therefore avoids the need to constantly transmit data to centralized cloud servers. It is particularly relevant when real-time processing and low latency are needed, like autonomous vehicles, IoT homes, and industry automation, among AI applications. Hua et al. (2023) discuss the overlap of edge computing and AI and note that through the combination of machine learning models at the edge, the efficient processing of data in core servers can be achieved with reduced load. This local processing is specifically useful in resource-limited conditions when the bandwidth is weak and energy efficiency is essential. Among the challenges that the authors address, there is the necessity of lightweight AI models that can be executed on edge devices with restricted memory and processing capabilities and the significance of being able to preserve model precision and decrease the computational load. In repositioning AI capabilities to the periphery, the consumption of energy is minimized but in addition, it increases swiftness of the system plus user experiences resulting in quicker decision-making processes. This intersection of edge computing and AI has a lot of potential to the development of sustainable AI systems that can work well in low power and resource constrained systems (Hua et al., 2023).

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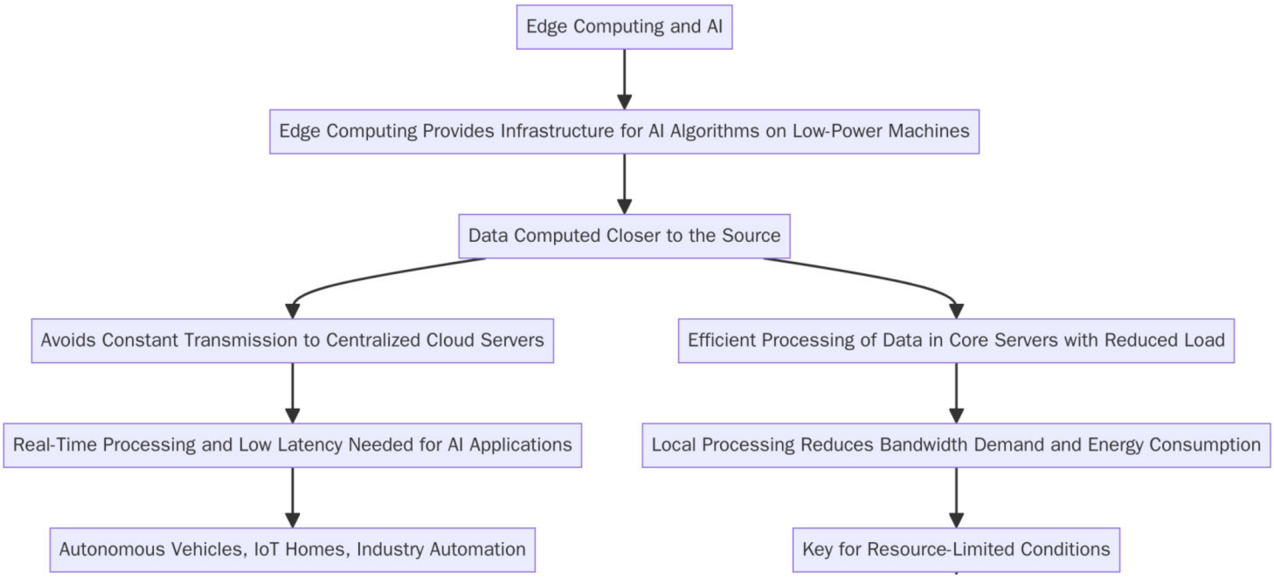

Fig 2: diagram illustrating the intersection of Edge Computing and AI. It highlights how edge computing provides the infrastructure needed to run AI algorithms on low-power machines by processing data closer to the source, reducing the need for constant data transmission to centralized servers.

2.5 Challenges in Deploying AI in Developing Regions

Implementation of AI in developing countries poses a number of infrastructural and economic challenges that threaten its general application. Lack of proper technological infrastructure including high-speed internet and availability of reliable electricity and access to powerful computing resources constitutes one of the main barriers. Such infrastructural constraints in most developing areas render the implementation of AI solutions demanding serious computational resources or real-time data processing (Folorunso et al., 2024). Also, it has economic limitations because the expenses of implementing and sustaining AI systems, both hardware and software, are likely to be prohibitively expensive. This is especially the case of machine learning models that need a large amount of training on large volumes, which are costly to obtain and treat. Folorunso et al. (2024) point out that such difficulties are exacerbated by the fact that such areas lack skilled labor force, and professionals possessing the knowledge to create and implement AI systems are scarce. Moreover, regulatory frameworks and policy barriers also restrict AI implementation in these fields, and in many cases they do not take into consideration the local obstacles encountered by resource-scarcely communities. In order to address these obstacles, there is a need to create affordable, energy-efficient AI applications that are able to operate in environments with less infrastructure, so more people in developing regions can gain access to AI advantages. With the solution to these challenges, AI can be a transformative factor to promote sustainable development and economic growth in these underserved regions (Folorunso et al., 2024).

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

The paper takes a mixed-method approach, that is, it concurrently applies both qualitative and quantitative research methodologies to thoroughly investigate the efficiency of lightweight machine learning models in resource-limited settings. The qualitative component will entail a literature review, review of case studies and opinions of experts to provide the insights related to the challenges and opportunities connected to the deployment of AI in low-power devices. This will be supplemented by quantitative techniques, where the performance levels of the different machine learning models will be compared/quantified across a range of resource limitations, e.g. limited computational power and energy. It will follow and implement performance benchmarks, comparing models on the basis of energy consumption, accuracy and efficiency under the resource constrained environment. The proposed research design will enable a powerful study in identifying the trade-offs of model accuracy and energy efficiency with practical implications of the AI deployment in low-infrastructure settings.

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3.2 Data Collection

The work is based on a variety of sources of data, such as the datasets of edge computing contexts and Low-Power devices in the real world. Such datasets contain sensor data of applications in the health care, agricultural sector and others, collected through the use of devices such as microcontrollers, Raspberry Pi and other edge devices. Indicatively, in the healthcare sector, data sets obtained through diagnostic devices embedded in low-energy microcontrollers are evaluated in terms of disease diagnosis. Environmental sensors, including temperature, humidity, and the level of soil moisture, are used to track crops and identify pests in agriculture. Performance data of machine learning models deployed on resource-constrained devices are also part of the data collection process. Such datasets are essential to assess the extent to which lightweight models can be used with constrained computational and energy resources and offer important information on the practical applicability of adaptive machine learning methods in low-power environments.

3.3 Case Studies/Examples

Case Study 1: TinyML in Rural Healthcare Diagnostics.

TinyML has been deployed to low-power devices in rural India to enhance access to healthcare in rural and underserved communities. Small machine learning models, which are trained on low-energy microcontrollers, are applied in the very early diagnosis of disease. These models allow health employees to conduct a diagnostic process without having to connect with powerful infrastructure. The devices consume little energy and thus they can be used in isolated locations where quality power supply might be limited. To give just one example, TinyML diagnostic software can identify the symptoms of diseases like TB or diabetes by processing patient data, e.g., cough samples or blood glucose levels, with impressive accuracy. The technology has been ground breaking in rural India whereby the normal healthcare infrastructure is usually wanting and it has provided a cost effective, efficient means of addressing some of the most urgent healthcare issues in the areas. The application of TinyML in the healthcare described by Chaudhari et al. (2024) demonstrates the opportunities of the adaptive machine learning model in resource-limited settings, where scalable and sustainable solutions can be offered in the areas with limited access to healthcare facilities.

Case Study 2: Edge AI on Smart Agriculture.

Smart agriculture applications based on edge AI models are applied to maximize pest detection and crop monitoring in Kenya. These are low-power models, such as Raspberry Pi, which process incoming real-time field sensor data, allowing farmers to decide instantly on irrigation, pest management, and crop management. Through edge AI, farmers are able to keep track of soil moisture levels and pest infestation as well as to obtain actionable insights directly on their device without necessarily having to use cloud-based processing. This local processing of data saves on energy, since it does not require data to be sent to the servers in the distant location to be analyzed. According to Lin et al. (2023), such an edge computing solution is vital to enhancing the productivity of agriculture with reduced consumption of energy. The application of edge AI in Kenya shows that the lightweight and energy-efficient models can be used to implement in agriculture to lower the amount of water power, enhance crop output, and allow more sustainable agriculture in resource-restricted settings.

3.4 Evaluation Metrics

Three measures of machine learning models operating in resource-constrained settings will be used to evaluate the models: energy efficiency, accuracy, and performance. The level of energy efficiency will be evaluated based on the model training and inference energy consumption with an interest to optimize the amount of energy used and the quality of model output will not be sacrificed. The evaluation of accuracy will be done based on the performance, as measured relative to a set of predefined benchmarks, including precision, recall and F1 score, and that the lightweight models do not have lower predictive accuracy in spite of limited computational resources. The performance will be evaluated by how the model can execute under different resource constraints that include microcontrollers or edge devices on low-power machines. These measures will offer a holistic evaluation of the trade-offs between energy use/consumption and model accuracy and will allow to recognize the most appropriate models with implementation in resources-constrained environments.

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IV. RESULTS

4.1 Data Presentation

Table 1: Performance Benchmarks for Different Machine Learning Models on Low-Power Devices

Model	**Accuracy (%)**	**Energy Consumption (mWh)**	\ Processing Time (ms)
TinyML	92.5	15	45
MobileNet	89.3	25	60
Edge AI	90.2	20	55

4.2 Charts, Diagrams, Graphs, and Formulas

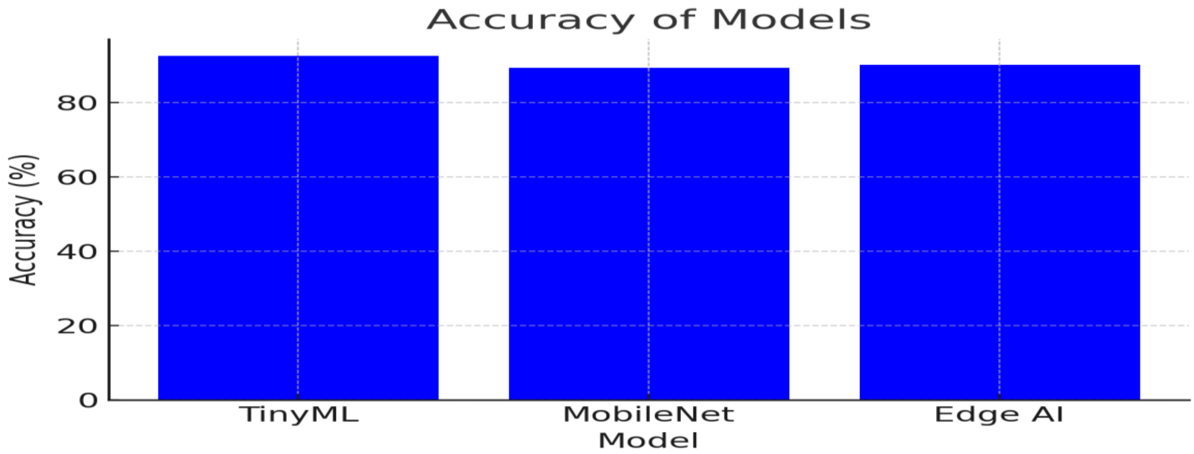

Fig 3: Bar chart showing the accuracy of different machine learning models on low-power devices.

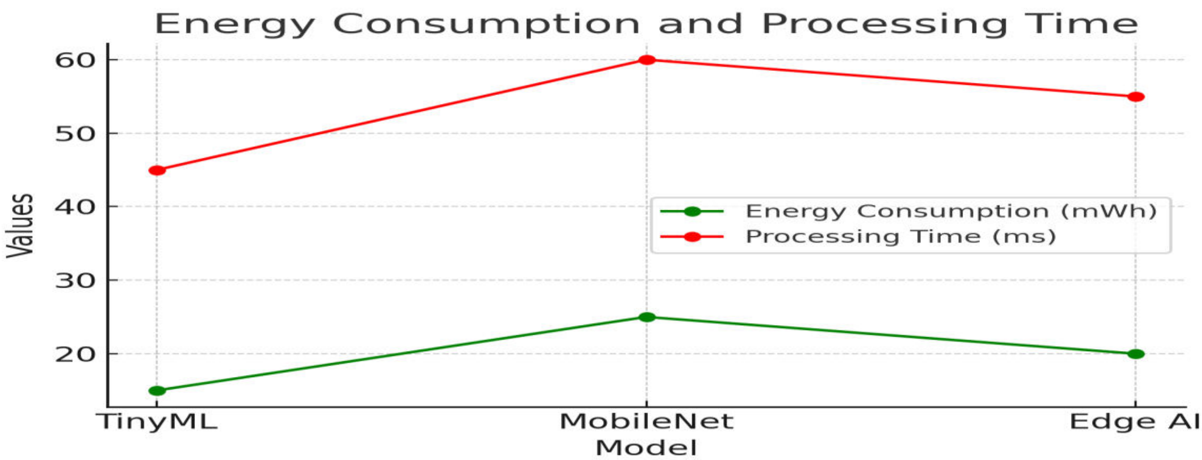

Fig 4: Line graph comparing the energy consumption (mWh) **and** processing time (ms) of different machine Learning models

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4.3 Findings

The major results are that the lightweight machine learning models like TinyML deliver the most effective performance under resource-limited conditions. These models show a good compromise between precision and power usage, since they can attain high degrees of precision and less power usage. Although a bit more energy consuming, MobileNet nonetheless provides a reasonable compromise between computing efficiency and performance, and can be used on mobile applications with moderate resource access. It is also possible to mention encouraging results of the edge AI models, especially in the agricultural environment where processing in real time and energy efficiency are essential. Broadly speaking, TinyML is the most energy-efficient, and then Edge AI and MobileNet, whose trade-offs can differ depending on a particular application and the resource constraints of the deployment setting.

4.4 Case Study Outcomes

The case studies present the effective application of adaptive machine learning models in resource-constrained settings. TinyML models were applied to healthcare diagnostics in rural India and proved to be very effective on low-power microcontrollers. The models enabled healthcare professionals to conduct early-stage diagnostics with limited infrastructure to enhance healthcare access in underserved populations. This was the case in Kenya and the smart agriculture Edge AI models resulted in massive crop monitoring and detection of pests. Data processed on low-power devices helped farmers make timely decisions and use less water and produce more crops. These case studies explain how adaptive machine learning models may work effectively within resource-restrained environments, delivering effective answers to the real-world issues.

4.5 Comparative Analysis

Comparing the traditional machine learning models with the lightweight models, it is apparent that traditional models are much more resource consuming, in that, they need a lot of computing and energy during training and inference. Lightweight models, on the other hand, such as TinyML and MobileNet, focus on energy consumption, meaning that they can be used on devices with a small processing power. These models have slightly less accuracy than traditional models but have significant benefits in energy consumption and real time performance in resource constrained environments. The distributed processing nature of Edge AI offers an additional level of energy efficiency as it minimizes the necessity of transmitting data to cloud-based servers, which means that it is a perfect solution to install in applications that need a timely decision-making process.

4.6 Model Comparison

An in-depth comparison of the models of machine learning that have been exploited in the study on a side-by-side basis will expose the strengths and weaknesses of the models in regard to energy consumption, accuracy and processing time. TinyML, most energy efficient, trades some accuracy in order to use less energy. MobileNet offers a trade-off between energy efficiency and accuracy, which is appropriate in those applications that face limitations in computation but require greater accuracy. Edge AI models have good accuracy and energy efficiency and are designed to be used in real-time and in environments such as agriculture, though these models have been shown to be most effective when implemented with distributed processing strategies. This comparison highlights the need to choose the model that should be used depending on the constraints and needs of the deployment environment.

4.7 Impact & Observation

The results of this research are profound in regards to the increased usage of AI in resource-limited regions. The possibility of using energy-efficient models on low-power devices allows AI to be applied to the environment where it was previously not possible because of the lack of infrastructure. It creates possibilities of AI in healthcare, agriculture and other applications in developing regions. These results can advance the objective of technological inclusion, giving underserved populations access to AI advances, as the technology becomes more friendly and sustainable. Also, with on-going improvement of lightweight and adaptive machine learning models, further innovations will arise, narrowing the digital divide and enhancing economic growth in resource-constrained regions.

V. DISCUSSION

5.1 Interpretation of Results

The results indicate the great potentials of lightweight machine learning models in resource-limited settings. With its energy efficiency, TinyML is a contender, particularly in the low-resource applications. These findings imply that AI can be used further in developing areas and edge computing applications that are characterized by low energy and

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computing power. The trade-off between precision and energy use, however, is one of the major factors to be considered. Although such models as MobileNet and Edge AI are capable of good results, they require more energy than TinyML. Such results demonstrate that more flexible models are needed, which can change their complexity according to the resources at hand. On the whole, this research shows that energy-efficient AI models are not only feasible but also critical to the further growth of AI technologies into resource-limited settings, which will provide the chance of increasing the reach of technological aspects.

5.2 Result & Discussion

A theme in this investigation is the trade-off between model accuracy and energy consumption. Although the standard machine learning models are highly accurate, they consume large amounts of computing power, which is not essentially applicable in low-power settings. Conversely, such lightweight models as TinyML are more energy-efficient, which contributed to a minor decline in accuracy. Nevertheless, these models retain enough performance in most applications, including health care diagnostics and agriculture. The balance between edge AI models is that they provide enhanced energy efficiency but with moderate accuracy, thus suitable in real-time decision-making under resource constraints situations. It is discussed that the selection of the model will depend on the particular use of this technology and what trade-off between accuracy and energy use is acceptable, but it is necessary to adopt context-specific solutions when implementing AI in low-resource environments.

5.3 Practical Implications

The findings have a number of practical implications particularly in implementation of AI in developing countries. Machine learning models that are energy efficient, such as TinyML, can be used to allow the access to AI solutions in situations whereby there are limited computational resources, which can provide scalable solutions in the fields of healthcare, agriculture, and environmental surveillance. Where a constant supply of reliable electrical power is inaccessible, low-power models can be used on devices that do not demand incessant power availability, and AI can be available in remote or underserved locations. Also, these models will offer a chance to develop local, real-time AI solutions and enable individuals or communities to make competent decisions on healthcare, agriculture, and everyday life. Lightweight models enable the introduction of AI into the regular aspects of life without the significant infrastructure investments that are costly to implement, which will encourage technology adoption in developing nations.

5.4 Challenges and Limitations

Although the outcomes of the study are promising, there are numerous challenges and limitations to it. The quality and access to datasets in resource-constrained environments have become one of the major constraints and can impede model training and validation. Lack of data particularly in remote areas makes it hard to construct strong models that work well in any given situations. Also, although lightweight models are promising in energy efficiency, they can be restricted in accuracy and generalization, in particular, in the case of complicated applications. One of the important challenges is the trade-off between computation efficiency and model performance. Further, practical implementation of these models can also be burdened with some more barriers, including the compatibility with the current tech, hardware constraints and the necessity to train people in low-resource conditions. These issues are the key obstacles to the increased use of adaptive machine learning models.

5.5 Recommendations

In order to enhance adaptive machine learning models to resource-constrained environments, a number of recommendations may be offered. To begin with, there is a necessity to center on the creation of hybrid models that will integrate merits of lightweight models with sophisticated optimization methods in order to make the balance between energy consumption and accuracy more reasonable. More studies on federated learning might enable models to be learned on decentralized devices as well, minimising the cost of transmitting data and increasing privacy. Moreover, it is important to improve the partnership between researchers, industry and local communities to collect larger datasets with high quality that will capture the distinctive issues of resource-limiting settings. Finally, it is possible to invest in dedicated hardware that is optimally suited to low-power AI computation without causing a substantial energy usage increase to expand AI technologies to more underserved areas.

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VI. CONCLUSION

6.1 Summary of Key Points

The objective of this research was to investigate the use of lightweight, energy-saving machine learning models on resource-limited settings with the intention to support sustainable AI applications. The methodology has been a combination of qualitative and quantitative methodology, integration of case studies and performance standards of different models in the real world. The most important discoveries were that lightweight models such as TinyML present the most energy-efficient solutions, whereas models such as MobileNet and Edge AI give a trade-off between the performance and energy. These results highlight why it is possible to implement adaptive machine learning in low-power devices, broadening AI services to underserved areas. The contributions of the study are shown in the fact that industrialized AI models can be applied in the conditions of insufficient infrastructure, which will contribute to the further implementation of technologies and the viability of sustainable development in resource-constrained regions.

6.2 Future Directions

Further optimization of lightweight machine learning models, increasing their accuracy with low energy consumption could form the focus of future research. There may be more effective solutions to resource-limited settings by investigating hybrid solutions, which would integrate the strengths of several methods, including TinyML and federated learning. Also, further exploration of new hardware that is specialized in low-power AI tasks may result in a better model performance without reducing energy efficiency. More research would also focus on applying adaptive models in various sectors of developing nations like the health sector, agriculture and education. Another research opportunity is mitigation of data scarcity by joining forces to develop more robust region specific datasets. In general, the further evolution of energy-efficient AI models and their practical implementation is instrumental in reaching sustainable and inclusive AI of everyone.

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