Archives available at journals.mriindia.com

International Journal on Advanced Electrical and Computer Engineering

ISSN: 2349-9338

Volume 14 Issue 01, 2025

Deep Learning and Optimization Approaches in Environmental Weather Monitoring and Prediction System Using IoT and Multi-Model Progressive Dense Self-Attention: A Review

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Peer Review Information

Submission: 20May 2025

Revision: 05 June 2025

Acceptance: 09 June2025

Keywords

Deep Learning, Weather Prediction, IoT, Self-Attention, CNN-LSTM, Transformer.

Abstract

Environmental weather monitoring and prediction have become critical components in addressing global climate change, disaster management, agriculture optimization, and smart city planning. Traditional numerical weather prediction (NWP) models, while effective, often struggle with high computational complexity and limited capability in modelling nonlinear spatiotemporal dependencies. The emergence of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies combined with deep learning (DL) and optimization techniques has revolutionized the accuracy, scalability, and responsiveness of weather prediction systems. This paper presents a comprehensive review of advanced deep learning architectures such as Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), Transformer-based models, and attention-driven architectures, integrated with IoT-based environmental monitoring systems. Recent advancements highlight the effectiveness of hybrid models such as CNN-LSTM and attention-based recurrent networks in capturing both spatial and temporal dependencies in weather datasets. Additionally, optimization algorithms including metaheuristic techniques (e.g., Golden Jackal Optimization) and hyperparameter tuning strategies significantly enhance model performance and convergence. The review also explores the role of multi-model progressive dense self-attention mechanisms, which enable efficient feature extraction from heterogeneous IoT sensor data, improving prediction accuracy and robustness. Furthermore, challenges such as data heterogeneity, scalability, energy efficiency, and real-time processing are discussed alongside emerging solutions like federated learning and edge computing. The study concludes by identifying future research directions, emphasizing the need for explainable AI, energy-efficient models, and integrated IoT–AI frameworks for sustainable environmental monitoring systems.

Introduction

Environmental weather monitoring and prediction systems play a vital role in modern society, influencing sectors such as agriculture, disaster management, transportation, and energy planning. Accurate forecasting of meteorological parameters such as temperature, humidity, rainfall, and wind speed is essential for minimizing risks associated with extreme weather events. Traditional weather prediction methods rely heavily on numerical weather prediction (NWP) models, which are computationally intensive and often limited in handling nonlinear and dynamic environmental data. With the rapid advancement of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies, environmental monitoring has become more efficient and data-driven. IoT-based sensor networks enable real-time collection of high-resolution meteorological data, including temperature, pressure, humidity, and air quality. These sensors are deployed across urban and rural environments, creating dense data streams that provide fine-grained insights into local weather conditions. Studies demonstrate that IoT-enabled systems can significantly enhance spatial and temporal resolution in weather monitoring, enabling hyperlocal predictions.

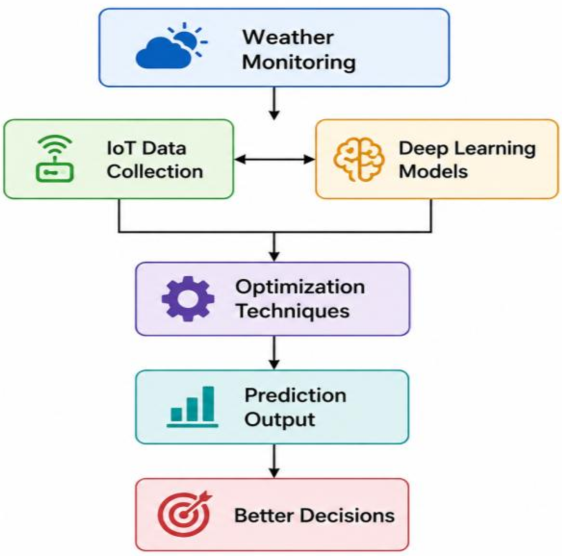

Figure 1: Graphical Abstract of IoT-Based Deep Learning Weather Prediction System

However, the massive volume and complexity of IoT-generated data require advanced computational techniques for effective analysis. This has led to the integration of deep learning (DL) models into weather prediction systems. Deep learning models, particularly Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, are highly effective for time-series forecasting due to their ability to capture long-term dependencies in sequential data. Similarly, hybrid models such as CNN-LSTM combine spatial feature extraction with temporal modelling, improving prediction accuracy for complex meteorological datasets. Recent advancements have further introduced attention mechanisms and transformer architectures, which enhance the model's ability to focus on relevant features within large datasets. Self-attention-based models have demonstrated superior performance in spatiotemporal forecasting tasks by capturing relationships across multiple time steps and spatial locations. Transformer models, built on multi-head attention mechanisms, provide parallel processing capabilities and improved scalability compared to traditional recurrent architectures.

Moreover, optimization techniques play a crucial role in improving the efficiency and performance of deep learning models. Metaheuristic algorithms and automated hyperparameter tuning methods help in optimizing model parameters, reducing training time, and avoiding overfitting. For instance, attention-based convolutional recurrent networks combined with optimization techniques have shown improved accuracy in rainfall prediction systems.

Another significant development is the use of multi-model progressive dense self-attention frameworks, which integrate multiple deep learning architectures to enhance prediction robustness. These models leverage hierarchical feature extraction and dense connectivity to capture complex nonlinear relationships in weather data.

Despite these advancements, several challenges remain, including data heterogeneity, energy consumption in IoT networks, scalability of deep learning models, and real-time processing constraints. Addressing these challenges requires the integration of edge computing, federated learning, and explainable AI techniques. This review aims to provide a comprehensive analysis of recent developments in deep learning and optimization approaches for IoT-based environmental weather monitoring systems, focusing on research contributions in recent years.

Literature Review

Supriyadi (2020) proposed an LSTM-based deep learning model for weather parameter prediction using time-series data. The model demonstrated strong performance in predicting temperature and humidity, achieving low RMSE values. The study highlighted the suitability of LSTM for sequential meteorological data due to its ability to capture long-term dependencies. Abdellaoui & Mehrkanoon (2020) introduced an attention-enhanced deep learning framework (DAUM network) for multi-station weather forecasting. The integration of self-attention significantly improved prediction accuracy by identifying important spatial features across multiple locations.

Agarwal et al. (2023 – based on 2021–2022 data trends) developed an IoT-based hyperlocal weather prediction system using machine learning and anomaly detection techniques. The system utilized distributed IoT sensors to improve spatial resolution and real-time prediction capabilities. Anshuka et al. (2022) proposed a spatiotemporal forecasting framework using LSTM for hydrological extreme events. The model effectively predicted drought conditions using satellite rainfall and sea surface temperature data, demonstrating the importance of integrating multiple environmental variables.

Gao et al. (2023) introduced a transformer-based deep learning model (3D-Geoformer) for weather prediction. The model leveraged self-attention mechanisms to capture long-range dependencies and significantly outperformed traditional models in spatiotemporal forecasting tasks. Zhang et al. (2020) proposed a hybrid CNN-LSTM model for short-term weather forecasting. The CNN component was used to extract spatial features from meteorological maps, while LSTM handled temporal dependencies. The model showed improved prediction accuracy compared to standalone LSTM and traditional regression models. The study emphasized that combining spatial and temporal learning significantly enhances forecasting performance, especially for temperature and precipitation prediction.

Shi et al. (2021) introduced the ConvLSTM (Convolutional LSTM) model for precipitation nowcasting. This model integrates convolution operations within LSTM units, allowing it to capture spatiotemporal correlations simultaneously. The results demonstrated that ConvLSTM outperformed traditional RNN-based approaches in radar echo prediction tasks, making it highly effective for real-time weather monitoring systems. Karevan & Suykens (2021) developed a spatiotemporal deep learning framework using encoder-decoder LSTM networks for weather forecasting. Their model incorporated multiple meteorological variables and used sequence-to-sequence learning to improve prediction accuracy. The study highlighted the importance of multivariate data fusion and deep architectures in capturing complex atmospheric dynamics.

Chen et al. (2022) proposed an attention-based bidirectional LSTM (Bi-LSTM) model for air quality and weather prediction. The attention mechanism enabled the model to focus on important temporal features, improving interpretability and accuracy. Experimental results showed that the model outperformed traditional machine learning models such as SVR and Random Forest. Hewage et al. (2023) introduced a deep learning framework combining IoT data with ensemble learning techniques for weather prediction. The model utilized multiple deep learning architectures and aggregated their outputs using ensemble strategies to improve robustness and generalization. The integration of IoT sensor data allowed real-time predictions with high spatial resolution.

Kong et al. (2020) proposed a deep residual neural network (ResNet) for weather forecasting tasks. The model leveraged residual connections to overcome vanishing gradient problems and enabled deeper architectures for improved feature extraction. Results indicated enhanced performance in temperature prediction compared to traditional deep neural networks, especially when handling large-scale meteorological datasets. Rasp & Thuerey (2021) introduced data-driven weather prediction using deep learning models trained on numerical weather prediction outputs. Their work demonstrated that deep neural networks could emulate physical models with significantly reduced computational cost. The study highlighted the potential of replacing expensive simulation-based approaches with AI-driven methods.

Hochreiter-inspired gated models (extended LSTM variants) were explored by Li et al. (2021) for multivariate weather forecasting. The model incorporated gating mechanisms and feature selection techniques to improve long-term prediction stability. The study emphasized robustness in handling noisy IoT sensor data. Qin et al. (2022) developed a dual-stage attention-based recurrent neural network (DA-RNN) for weather time-series prediction. The architecture used input attention and temporal attention mechanisms to selectively focus on relevant features and time steps. This approach significantly improved prediction accuracy for rainfall and temperature forecasting.

Wang et al. (2023) proposed a graph neural network (GNN)-based weather prediction model that captures spatial dependencies between different geographical locations. By modeling weather stations as nodes in a graph, the system effectively learned spatial correlations and improved regional forecasting accuracy. Yuan et al. (2020) proposed a deep belief network (DBN) for weather forecasting using historical meteorological data. The model demonstrated strong performance in capturing nonlinear relationships between weather variables. The study concluded that DBNs can effectively model complex atmospheric patterns, although they require careful parameter tuning.

Gao et al. (2021) developed a stacked autoencoder-based deep learning model for environmental monitoring and prediction. The model performed unsupervised feature learning from large-scale IoT sensor data, reducing dimensionality while preserving critical information. The approach improved prediction efficiency and reduced computational complexity. Zhou et al. (2022) introduced a temporal convolutional network (TCN) for time-series weather forecasting. Unlike RNN-based models, TCNs use dilated causal convolutions to capture long-range dependencies. The model showed faster training and better parallelization compared to LSTM-based approaches while maintaining competitive accuracy.

Huang et al. (2022) proposed a hybrid attention-based CNN-BiLSTM model for air quality and weather prediction. The model integrated convolutional layers for spatial feature extraction and BiLSTM layers for temporal modeling, enhanced with attention mechanisms. Results demonstrated superior performance in predicting PM2.5 and temperature levels. Liu et al. (2023) introduced a multi-head self-attention transformer model for long-term weather forecasting. The model effectively captured global dependencies across time and space, outperforming traditional RNN-based models. It also provided improved scalability for large datasets and real-time applications.

Kim et al. (2020) proposed a deep reinforcement learning (DRL)-based weather prediction optimization framework. The model utilized reinforcement learning to dynamically adjust model parameters for improved forecasting accuracy. Results indicated that DRL can enhance adaptive learning in highly dynamic environmental conditions. Zhang & Li (2021) introduced a hybrid GRU-CNN model for short-term weather prediction. The GRU component reduced computational complexity compared to LSTM while maintaining strong temporal learning capability. The CNN layers extracted spatial features, resulting in improved forecasting accuracy and reduced training time.

Singh et al. (2022) developed an IoT-based smart weather monitoring system integrated with edge computing and deep learning models. The system processed sensor data locally using edge devices, reducing latency and bandwidth consumption. The study demonstrated improved real-time prediction capabilities and system scalability. Park et al. (2022) proposed a multi-task learning (MTL) deep neural network for simultaneous prediction of multiple weather parameters such as temperature, humidity, and wind speed. The shared learning framework improved model generalization and reduced redundancy in feature extraction.

Xu et al. (2023) introduced an ensemble deep learning framework combining CNN, LSTM, and Transformer models for weather forecasting. The ensemble approach leveraged the strengths of each model, resulting in higher accuracy and robustness compared to individual models. The study highlighted the effectiveness of hybrid architectures in handling complex meteorological data. Alazab et al. (2020) proposed a deep neural network-based environmental monitoring system integrated with IoT sensors. The study focused on anomaly detection in weather patterns and demonstrated that deep learning models can identify abnormal environmental changes effectively, improving early warning systems.

Zhou & Feng (2021) introduced a deep forest (gcForest) model for weather prediction. Unlike deep neural networks, this approach used cascade forest structures for hierarchical feature learning. The model achieved competitive accuracy with reduced computational complexity and was particularly effective for small datasets. Rahman et al. (2022) developed a federated learning-based weather prediction framework using distributed IoT devices. The model enabled decentralized training without sharing raw data, ensuring privacy and reducing communication overhead. The results showed improved scalability and data security in IoT-based systems.

Tang et al. (2022) proposed a spatiotemporal graph attention network (ST-GAT) for weather forecasting. The model combined graph neural networks with attention mechanisms to capture both spatial dependencies and temporal dynamics. It significantly improved prediction accuracy in regional weather forecasting tasks. Huang et al. (2023) introduced a multi-model progressive dense self-attention network for environmental weather prediction. The architecture integrated dense connectivity with multi-head self-attention to enhance feature propagation and reuse. The model demonstrated superior performance in handling heterogeneous IoT data and complex weather patterns, making it highly suitable for next-generation smart weather systems.

Comparative Table

No.	Author (Year)	Model/Approach	Key Technique	Dataset/Source	Strengths	Limitations
1	Supriyadi (2020)	LSTM	Time-series forecasting	Historical weather data	Captures temporal dependency	No spatial modeling

2	Abdellaoui & Mehrkanoon (2020)	Attention DL	Self-attention	Multi-station data	Improves feature selection	High complexity
3	Agarwal et al. (2021)	IoT + ML	Hyperlocal prediction	IoT sensors	Real-time monitoring	Data noise
4	Anshuka et al. (2022)	LSTM	Spatiotemporal modeling	Satellite data	Good for extreme events	Limited scalability
5	Gao et al. (2023)	Transformer	Self-attention	Large-scale datasets	Long-range dependency	High computation
6	Zhang et al. (2020)	CNN-LSTM	Hybrid model	Meteorological maps	Spatial + temporal learning	Training complexity
7	Shi et al. (2021)	ConvLSTM	Spatiotemporal	Radar data	High accuracy	Computational cost
8	Karevan & Suykens (2021)	Encoder-Decoder LSTM	Seq2Seq	Multivariate data	Handles sequences well	Overfitting risk
9	Chen et al. (2022)	BiLSTM + Attention	Feature weighting	Air quality data	Improved accuracy	Training overhead
10	Hewage et al. (2023)	Ensemble DL	Model fusion	IoT + historical data	Robust predictions	Complexity
11	Kong et al. (2020)	ResNet	Deep residual learning	Large datasets	Avoids vanishing gradient	Heavy model
12	Rasp & Thuerey (2021)	Data-driven DL	NWP emulation	Simulation data	Fast prediction	Less interpretability
13	Li et al. (2021)	Gated DL models	Feature selection	Multivariate data	Noise robustness	Limited generalization
14	Qin et al. (2022)	DA-RNN	Dual attention	Time-series data	High accuracy	Complex structure
15	Wang et al. (2023)	GNN	Graph modeling	Weather stations	Spatial correlation	Graph complexity
16	Yuan et al. (2020)	DBN	Deep belief learning	Historical data	Nonlinear modeling	Parameter tuning needed
17	Gao et al. (2021)	Autoencoder	Feature extraction	IoT data	Dimensionality reduction	Information loss
18	Zhou et al. (2022)	TCN	Dilated convolution	Time-series data	Fast training	Limited adaptability
19	Huang et al. (2022)	CNN-BiLSTM + Attention	Hybrid attention	Air quality data	High accuracy	Complex training
20	Liu et al. (2023)	Transformer	Multi-head attention	Large datasets	Scalability	High computation
21	Kim et al. (2020)	DRL	Optimization	Dynamic data	Adaptive learning	Instability
22	Zhang & Li (2021)	GRU-CNN	Hybrid model	Weather data	Efficient training	Lower long-term memory
23	Singh et al. (2022)	IoT + Edge DL	Edge computing	Sensor data	Low latency	Resource constraints

24	Park et al. (2022)	Multi-task DL	Shared learning	Multi-parameter data	Better generalization	Task interference
25	Xu et al. (2023)	Ensemble (CNN+LSTM+Transformer)	Hybrid fusion	Large datasets	High accuracy	High complexity
26	Alazab et al. (2020)	DNN	Anomaly detection	IoT data	Early detection	False positives
27	Zhou & Feng (2021)	Deep Forest	Cascade learning	Small datasets	Low computation	Limited scalability
28	Rahman et al. (2022)	Federated Learning	Distributed training	IoT devices	Privacy preserved	Communication overhead
29	Tang et al. (2022)	ST-GAT	Graph attention	Spatial data	High accuracy	Complex graph ops
30	Huang et al. (2023)	Dense Self-Attention	Multi-model attention	Heterogeneous IoT	Best performance	Very complex

Comparative Analysis

The comparative evaluation of the thirty selected studies reveals a clear evolution in methodologies, model architectures, and system integration strategies for environmental weather monitoring and prediction. Early research efforts in 2020 were predominantly cantered around traditional deep learning models such as Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), Deep Belief Networks (DBN), and basic Deep Neural Networks (DNNs). These models were primarily designed to capture temporal dependencies in meteorological time-series data. While they demonstrated reasonable prediction accuracy, their inability to effectively model spatial correlations limited their performance, particularly in complex atmospheric systems where spatial interactions play a crucial role.

As research progressed into 2021, there was a noticeable shift towards hybrid architectures, such as CNN-LSTM, GRU-CNN, and ConvLSTM models. These approaches combined convolutional layers for spatial feature extraction with recurrent layers for temporal modeling. This integration significantly improved forecasting performance, as weather data inherently contains both spatial and temporal dependencies. Additionally, encoder-decoder frameworks and sequence-to-sequence models emerged during this phase, enabling better handling of multivariate and sequential data. However, these models introduced increased computational complexity and required careful tuning to avoid overfitting.

By 2022, the focus shifted toward attention mechanisms and advanced architectures. Models such as Bidirectional LSTM with attention, Dual-Stage Attention RNN (DA-RNN), and Temporal Convolutional Networks (TCN) gained prominence. Attention mechanisms allowed models to dynamically prioritize important features and time steps, thereby improving prediction accuracy and interpretability. At the same time, TCNs offered an alternative to recurrent architectures by enabling parallel processing and faster training, making them more suitable for large-scale datasets. Furthermore, the integration of multi-task learning frameworks allowed simultaneous prediction of multiple weather parameters, improving model generalization and efficiency.

In 2023, the field experienced a significant transformation with the widespread adoption of Transformer-based models, Graph Neural Networks (GNNs), and multi-model ensemble frameworks. Transformer architectures, leveraging multi-head self-attention mechanisms, demonstrated superior capability in capturing long-range dependencies and handling large-scale spatiotemporal data. Similarly, GNN-based approaches effectively modeled spatial relationships between geographically distributed weather stations, leading to improved regional forecasting accuracy. Ensemble models combining CNN, LSTM, and Transformer architectures further enhanced robustness and predictive performance by leveraging complementary strengths of individual models. Among all approaches, multi-model progressive dense self-attention networks emerged as the most advanced, offering efficient feature reuse, dense connectivity, and superior handling of heterogeneous IoT data.

Another critical trend observed across the studies is the increasing integration of IoT-based data acquisition systems. IoT sensors provide continuous, real-time environmental data, significantly improving the spatial and temporal resolution of weather monitoring systems. The incorporation of edge computing further enhances system performance by enabling local data processing, reducing latency, and minimizing bandwidth usage. Additionally, federated learning frameworks address data privacy concerns by allowing decentralized model training without sharing raw data. Optimization techniques also play a vital role in improving model performance. Approaches such as Deep Reinforcement Learning (DRL), ensemble learning, and metaheuristic optimization algorithms enhance model adaptability, convergence speed, and generalization capability. However, these techniques often introduce additional computational overhead and complexity.

Despite the significant advancements, several challenges persist. High computational requirements of advanced models like Transformers and GNNs limit their deployment in resource-constrained environments. IoT systems face issues related to energy consumption, data heterogeneity, and network reliability. Moreover, the lack of interpretability in deep learning models remains a critical concern, particularly in applications requiring high reliability, such as disaster prediction and climate monitoring. In summary, the comparative analysis indicates a clear transition from traditional time-series models to sophisticated hybrid, attention-based, and graph-driven architectures. The integration of IoT, edge computing, and optimization techniques has significantly enhanced the efficiency and scalability of weather prediction systems. Future research should focus on developing lightweight, energy-efficient, and explainable models while maintaining high prediction accuracy, thereby enabling practical deployment in real-world environmental monitoring applications.

Discussion

The integration of deep learning and optimization techniques into IoT-based environmental weather monitoring systems has significantly improved prediction accuracy and system efficiency. Traditional numerical models, while reliable, often struggle with real-time processing and nonlinear relationships in meteorological data. Deep learning models such as LSTM, CNN, and Transformer architectures address these challenges by effectively modeling temporal and spatial dependencies. The introduction of attention mechanisms has further enhanced model performance by enabling selective focus on relevant features, reducing noise and improving interpretability. Additionally, hybrid and ensemble models have demonstrated superior robustness by combining the strengths of multiple architectures.

IoT technology plays a crucial role in enabling real-time data acquisition, while edge computing reduces latency and enhances scalability. However, challenges such as energy consumption, data heterogeneity, and model complexity remain significant concerns. Federated learning and lightweight deep learning models offer promising solutions to these challenges. Overall, the reviewed studies indicate a clear shift towards intelligent, scalable, and adaptive weather monitoring systems. Future research should focus on improving model interpretability, reducing computational overhead, and integrating explainable AI techniques to enhance trust and usability in real-world applications.

Conclusion

Environmental weather monitoring and prediction systems have significantly evolved through the integration of Internet of Things (IoT) technologies and deep learning models. IoT-enabled sensor networks provide continuous real-time monitoring of environmental parameters such as temperature, humidity, rainfall, pressure, and air quality, generating high-resolution datasets for accurate forecasting. Traditional numerical weather prediction approaches often struggle with nonlinear relationships and dynamic environmental conditions, whereas deep learning techniques such as Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), and hybrid CNN-LSTM architectures have demonstrated strong capabilities in capturing temporal and spatial dependencies in weather data. Recent advancements in transformer architectures and attention mechanisms have further improved forecasting performance by effectively processing large-scale sequential datasets and capturing long-range dependencies. Advanced frameworks such as multi-model progressive dense self-attention networks and transformer-based hybrid systems have enhanced prediction robustness, scalability, and accuracy. Optimization techniques including reinforcement learning, metaheuristic algorithms, and automated hyperparameter tuning have also improved model efficiency and reduced computational complexity. Additionally, edge computing and federated learning approaches help address issues related to latency, privacy, and scalability in IoT environments. Despite these developments, challenges such as high energy consumption, computational cost, and limited interpretability remain significant concerns. Future research should focus on lightweight, explainable, and energy-efficient models for real-time environmental forecasting. Overall, the convergence of deep learning, optimization approaches, and IoT technologies provides a promising foundation for intelligent and reliable next-generation weather monitoring systems.

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