International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (IJTSRD)
Volume 10 Issue 3, May-Jun 2026 Available Online: www.ijtsrd.com e-ISSN: 2456 – 6470

Fault Detection in Three-Phase Power Systems Using Deep Learning in MATLAB

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ABSTRACT

The transmission line is one of the most critical components of an electrical power system, as it is responsible for transferring electrical energy from generating stations to distribution networks and end users. With the rapid growth in electricity demand and the continuous expansion of modern power infrastructure, the reliability and efficiency of transmission systems have become increasingly important. Transmission lines carry a significant portion of the generated power over long distances, making their stable operation essential for maintaining uninterrupted power supply. In recent years, the gap between limited power generation resources and the continuously increasing energy demand has intensified the need to minimize power losses in transmission systems. These losses include transmission losses, technical losses, and other physical losses that directly affect system efficiency and operational performance. Additionally, reactive power imbalance and voltage deviations are major concerns in long-distance transmission networks, as they can reduce power quality and system stability. Fault analysis has therefore become a major area of focus in power system engineering. Rapid and accurate fault detection is essential to isolate faulty sections within a short period of time and restore the power system with minimal interruption. However, detecting and identifying faults in transmission lines remains a challenging task due to the complex nature of interconnected power networks and varying operating conditions. Since transmission lines form the backbone of the entire power system, they are highly vulnerable to different types of electrical and environmental disturbances. This paper presents a comprehensive review of transmission line fault detection techniques and highlights their importance in improving system reliability, operational stability, and fault management efficiency.

How to cite this paper: Ghodake Jagadish B. | Bansode Rahul S. "Fault Detection in Three-Phase Power Systems Using Deep Learning in MATLAB" Published in International Journal of Trend in Scientific Research and Development (ijtsrd), ISSN: 2456-6470, Volume-10 | Issue-3, June 2026, pp.317-322, URL: www.ijtsrd.com/papers/ijtsrd125249.pdf

IJTSRD125249

I. INTRODUCTION

Transmission line protection has always been a significant area of concern in electrical power system engineering because transmission networks are continuously exposed to environmental and operational disturbances. The protection system plays a vital role in detecting, classifying, and locating faults while ensuring the safety of equipment and maintaining the stability of the entire power network. An efficient protection system minimizes damage to system components and helps maintain continuous power delivery with minimal interruption. Faults in transmission lines are unavoidable in any practical power system. These faults interrupt the normal flow of electrical power and adversely affect the reliability and quality of supply. With the increasing demand for high system performance, reliability, and uninterrupted power transmission, accurate fault analysis has become essential. Rapid fault detection and isolation enable the restoration of the system to its normal operating condition within a short duration, thereby reducing downtime and preventing further system disturbances. Transmission lines serve as the primary medium for transferring electrical energy from generating stations to load centers through distribution networks. Since the early development of power transmission and distribution systems, power system engineers have focused on improving fault detection and fault location techniques. Early detection of faults provides effective protection for electrical equipment and allows the faulty section to be disconnected safely from the healthy part of the system. This protective action prevents severe damage, improves operational safety, and enhances the overall reliability of interconnected power systems. If faults are not detected promptly, they may create serious disturbances that can affect the stability and performance of the entire interconnected network.

Types of Faults in Transmission Lines

Transmission line faults are broadly classified into two major categories: symmetrical faults and unsymmetrical faults.

1. Symmetrical Faults

Symmetrical faults are balanced faults that affect all three phases equally. Although these faults occur less frequently, they are highly severe and can produce large fault currents.

A. Three-Phase-to-Ground Fault (LLL-G Fault)

A Line-to-Line-to-Line-to-Ground (LLL-G) fault occurs when all three phases simultaneously come into contact with each other and the ground. This fault creates a balanced short-circuit condition and results in extremely high fault currents. Such faults can cause major disturbances in the power system, damage transmission equipment, and create significant safety risks if not cleared rapidly.

B. Three-Phase Fault (LLL Fault)

A Line-to-Line-to-Line (LLL) fault occurs when all three phase conductors are short-circuited together without involving the ground. This type of fault is also symmetrical in nature and produces severe electrical stress on the system. Due to the large magnitude of current generated during the fault condition, immediate protective action is required to prevent equipment damage and maintain system stability.

2. Unsymmetrical Faults

Unsymmetrical faults are unbalanced faults that affect one or two phases of the system. These faults are more common in practical transmission networks.

A. Line-to-Ground Fault (L-G Fault)

A Line-to-Ground fault occurs when a single phase conductor comes into contact with the ground or neutral conductor. This generally happens because of insulation failure, lightning strikes, or environmental conditions. It is the most common type of transmission line fault and can lead to voltage imbalance, equipment damage, and safety hazards if not detected quickly.

B. Line-to-Line Fault (L-L Fault)

A Line-to-Line fault occurs when two phase conductors come into direct contact with each other due to insulation failure or external disturbances. This fault creates an unbalanced condition in the power system and generates high fault currents between the affected phases. Proper fault detection and isolation are necessary to prevent further damage to the transmission network.

C. Double Line-to-Ground Fault (L-L-G Fault)

A Double Line-to-Ground fault occurs when two phase conductors simultaneously come into contact with the ground. This fault condition causes severe electrical disturbances and may lead to considerable damage to power system equipment. Since both phase imbalance and grounding are involved, this fault is more complex and requires efficient protection techniques for rapid fault clearance. Overall, accurate fault detection and classification are essential for improving transmission line reliability, maintaining system stability, and ensuring the safe operation of modern electrical power systems.

II. PROPOSED SYSTEM

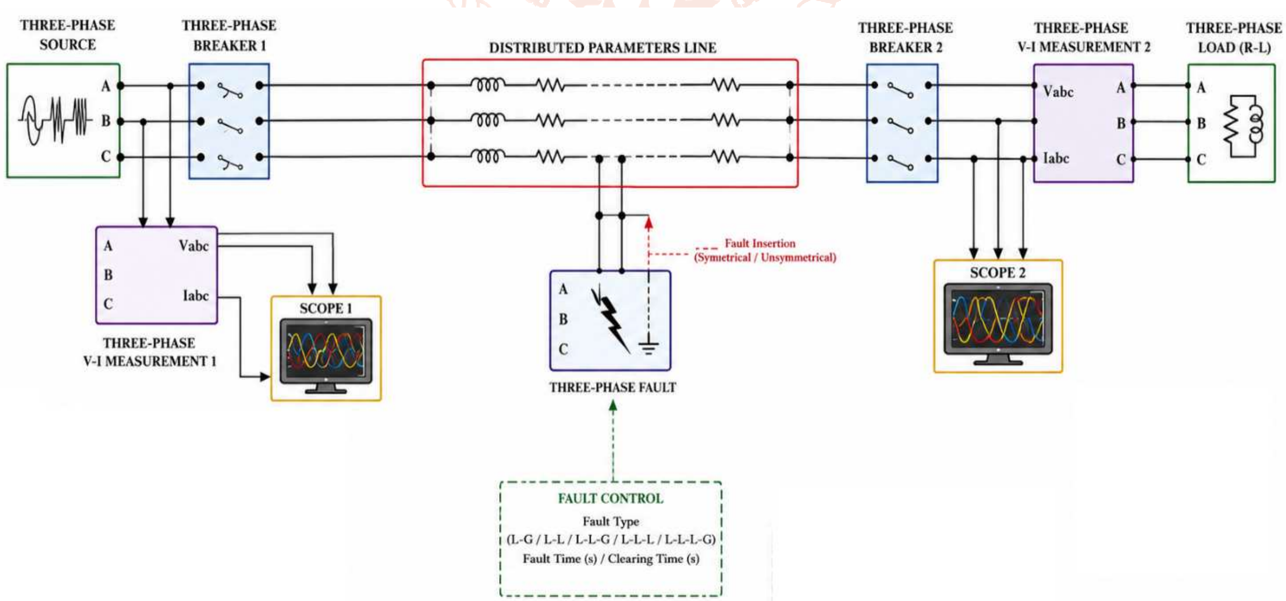
The proposed system is designed and implemented in the MATLAB/Simulink environment to analyze, detect, and monitor faults occurring in a three-phase electrical transmission line. The primary objective of this model is to study the behavior of transmission line parameters under normal and fault conditions and to evaluate the performance of the protection system during various fault scenarios. The developed model provides a reliable platform for analyzing voltage and current variations, fault detection mechanisms, and system stability in a controlled simulation environment. The complete system consists of a three-phase power source, transmission line model, voltage and current measurement blocks, circuit breakers, fault generation unit, scopes for waveform observation, and a load connected at the receiving end. The transmission system is modeled to represent a practical long-distance power transmission network operating under realistic electrical conditions. At the sending end, a **Three-Phase Source** block is used to generate balanced three-phase AC power. This source supplies electrical energy to the transmission line and represents the generation side of the power system. The generated voltage and current are monitored using the **Three-Phase V-I Measurement** block, which continuously measures the electrical parameters of the system. These measurements are important for observing the effect of faults on transmission line performance.

The transmission medium is modeled using a **Distributed Parameters Line** block. This block accurately represents the electrical characteristics of a practical transmission line, including resistance, inductance, capacitance, and conductance distributed along the line length. The distributed parameter approach improves simulation accuracy, especially during transient and fault conditions. The transmission line transfers electrical power from the source side to the receiving end load under both healthy and faulty operating conditions. To protect the system and control power flow, **Three-Phase Breaker** blocks are connected at both ends of the transmission line. These breakers act as switching and protection devices that isolate the faulty section whenever abnormal conditions are detected. During fault occurrence, the breakers help minimize equipment damage and maintain system stability by disconnecting the affected portion of the network. A **Three-Phase Fault** block is incorporated into the model to simulate different types of transmission line faults. This block allows the introduction of symmetrical and unsymmetrical faults such as:

- Single Line-to-Ground (L-G) Fault
- Line-to-Line (L-L) Fault
- Double Line-to-Ground (L-L-G) Fault
- Three-Phase (L-L-L) Fault
- Three-Phase-to-Ground (L-L-L-G) Fault

The fault block is controlled using a switching mechanism that introduces faults at specified time intervals during simulation. By varying the fault type and fault duration, the system behavior under different fault conditions can be thoroughly analyzed.

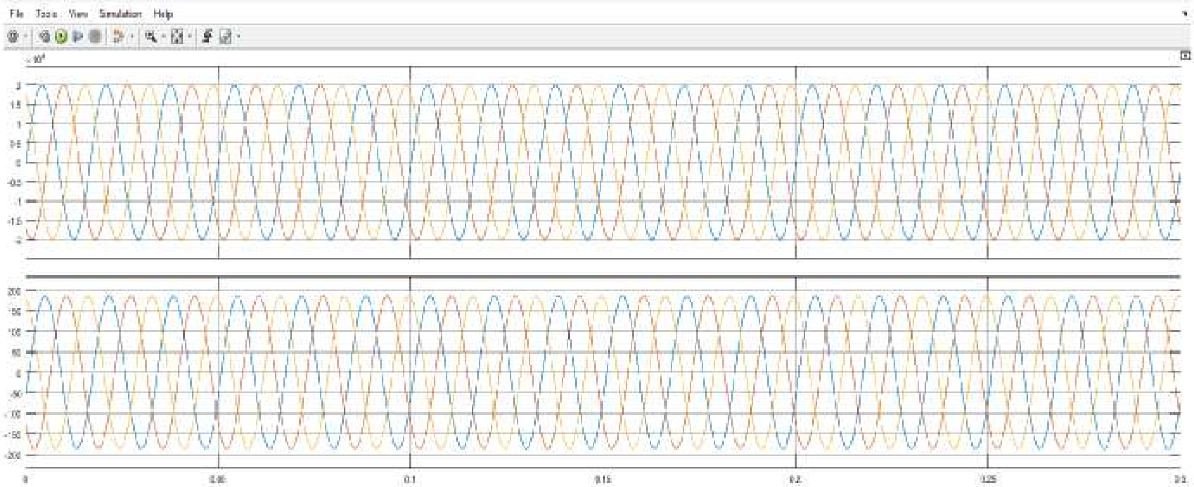
At the receiving end, another **Three-Phase V-I Measurement** block is connected to measure output voltage and current after the transmission line. These signals are further connected to **Scope** blocks that display real-time waveforms of voltage and current. The scopes help in visualizing disturbances caused by faults, including sudden current rise, voltage sag, waveform distortion, and transient oscillations. The MATLAB model also includes a **powergui** block, which is essential for performing power system simulations in Simulink. The powergui block provides simulation control, initialization of electrical parameters, and analysis tools for studying transient and steady-state responses of the system. During normal operating conditions, the transmission line delivers power smoothly from the source to the load with stable voltage and current waveforms. However, when a fault occurs, abnormal variations in current and voltage are observed immediately. The fault current increases significantly, while the voltage magnitude decreases depending on the type and severity of the fault. These variations are captured through the measurement and scope blocks for detailed analysis. The proposed MATLAB/Simulink model provides an effective and flexible platform for transmission line fault analysis. It enables accurate investigation of fault characteristics, system response, and protective operation under different fault conditions. The system can further be extended for intelligent fault classification, fault location estimation, and implementation of advanced protection techniques using Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning algorithms.



III. EXPECTED RESULTS

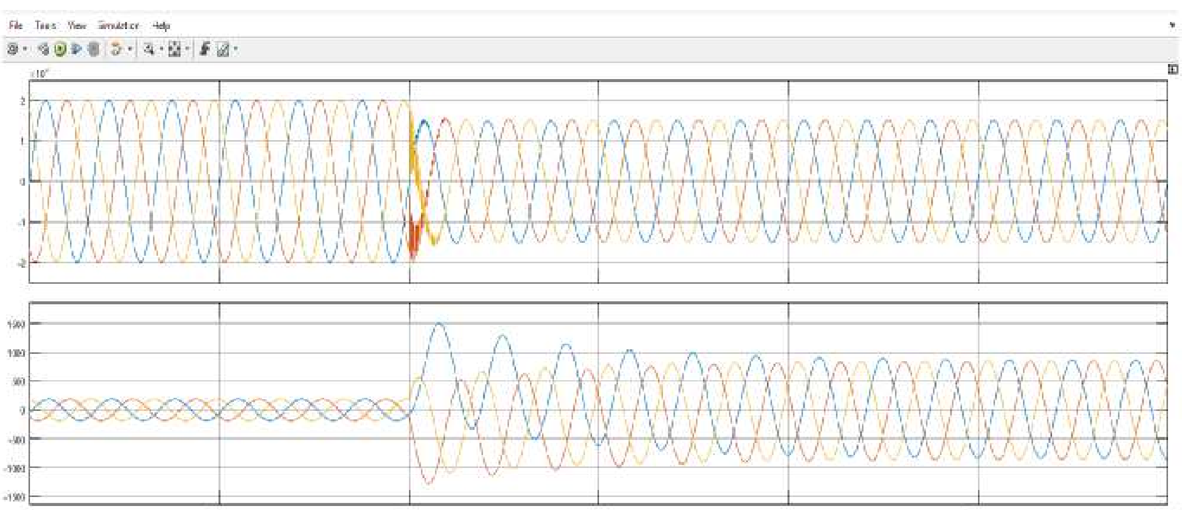
1. No Fault Condition

Under the no fault condition, the transmission line was operated under normal steady-state conditions without any disturbances. As observed in the first simulation result, the waveform is clean, smooth, and perfectly sinusoidal. The X-axis represents time ranging from 0.00 to 0.30 seconds, while the Y-axis represents the voltage or current magnitude, which varies between -200 to +200 units. There are no spikes, distortions, or irregularities in the signal, indicating that all three phases are balanced and the system is healthy. This condition serves as the baseline reference for comparing faulty and post-fault scenarios. The absence of any transient surges or harmonic distortions confirms that the transmission line is capable of transmitting power efficiently without any interruption or loss of quality under normal operating conditions.



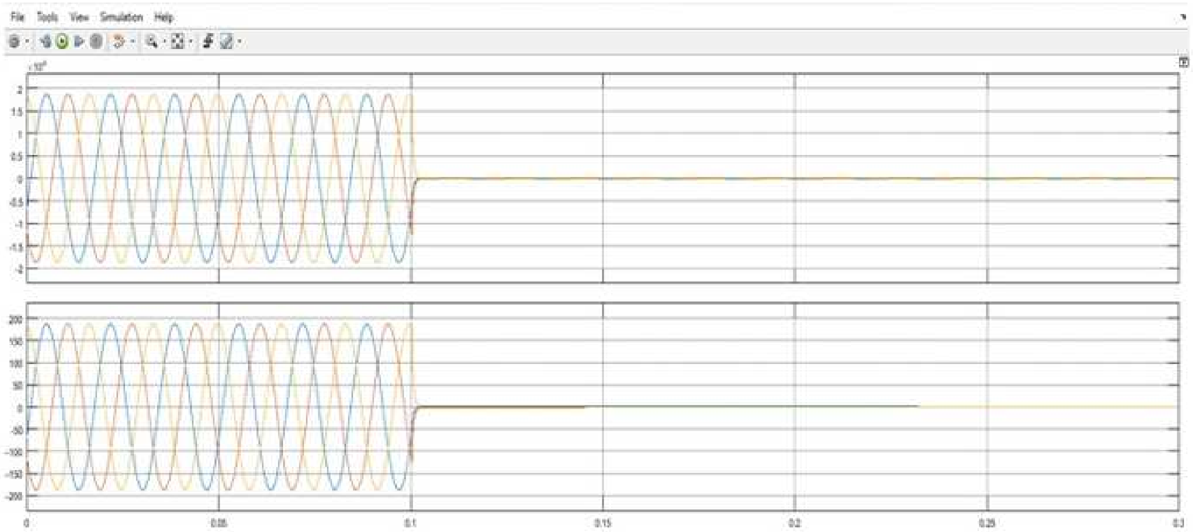
2. Faulty Condition

Under the faulty condition, a symmetrical or unsymmetrical fault was intentionally introduced into the transmission line. The second simulation result clearly shows a highly distorted, irregular, and noisy waveform. The X-axis continues to represent time from 0.00 to 0.30 seconds; however, the Y-axis scale has expanded dramatically, ranging from approximately -2 up to 1734 units and even higher. This significant rise in magnitude indicates a large fault current surge, which is typically caused by a severe fault such as Line-to-Line-to-Line (LLL), Line-to-Line-to-Line-to-Ground (LLL-G), or other unsymmetrical faults like Line-to-Ground (LG) or Line-to-Line (LL). Multiple color-coded signals (Red, Blue, Green, Orange, Purple, Yellow) are observed, representing different phases or measured parameters. The waveform exhibits sharp transients, harmonic distortions, and nonlinear behavior due to fault impedance (Zf) and ground path involvement. This condition clearly demonstrates the electrical disturbance caused by the fault, which if not cleared quickly, can lead to equipment damage, safety hazards, and power supply interruptions.



3. Condition after Circuit Breaker Operation

After the fault was detected by the protection system, the circuit breaker operated to isolate the faulty section of the transmission line. The third simulation result illustrates the post-fault condition, where the waveform has returned to a clean, smooth, and sinusoidal shape, identical to the no fault condition. The X-axis remains from 0.00 to 0.30 seconds, and the Y-axis magnitude has returned to the normal operating range of -200 to +200 units. There are no remaining distortions, spikes, or irregularities, confirming that the fault has been successfully cleared. The healthy portion of the power system continues to operate normally with minimal interruption. This result validates the effectiveness of the fault detection algorithm and the protective relaying scheme. It demonstrates that the circuit breaker operates in a timely manner to disconnect the faulty part, thereby preventing damage to equipment and ensuring rapid restoration of power supply. The system's reliability and stability are maintained, aligning with the paper's objective of minimizing downtime and improving overall power system performance.



IV. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the Transmission Line Fault Detection System plays a significant role in ensuring the reliable, secure, and efficient operation of modern electrical power systems. Since transmission lines are continuously exposed to environmental disturbances, equipment failures, and electrical abnormalities, the implementation of an effective fault detection mechanism is essential for maintaining system stability and uninterrupted power supply. The proposed system enables accurate detection and analysis of various transmission line faults, including symmetrical and unsymmetrical fault conditions. By identifying faults at an early stage, the system helps in rapidly isolating the faulty section and restoring normal operation within a short duration. This reduces the possibility of severe equipment damage, minimizes power interruption, and improves the overall reliability of the transmission network. The MATLAB/Simulink-based model developed in this work successfully demonstrates the behavior of voltage and current waveforms under normal and faulty operating conditions. The simulation results show that fault occurrence causes significant variations in electrical parameters, which can be effectively monitored using measurement and protection blocks. The proposed approach therefore provides a reliable platform for fault analysis, system monitoring, and protection studies in transmission line applications. Another important advantage of transmission line fault detection systems is the improvement in operational safety and maintenance efficiency. Accurate fault location allows maintenance personnel to identify the affected section quickly, reducing repair time and preventing the propagation of faults to interconnected parts of the power system. This enhances the protection of electrical equipment and supports safer system operation. Furthermore, the implementation of advanced fault detection techniques contributes to reduced downtime, lower maintenance costs, and improved resource utilization. Continuous monitoring and analysis of system data also support predictive maintenance and future system planning. By utilizing data-driven analysis, power utilities can improve decision-making processes, optimize system performance, and enhance overall operational efficiency. Overall, the Transmission Line Fault Detection System presented in this work provides an effective solution for improving the reliability, safety, and stability of electrical transmission networks. The proposed model can be further extended with intelligent techniques such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, and IoT-based monitoring systems for achieving faster fault classification, accurate fault location, and real-time smart grid protection in modern power systems.

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