IJCRT.ORG ISSN : 2320-2882

INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF CREATIVE RESEARCH THOUGHTS (IJCRT)

An International Open Access, Peer-reviewed, Refereed Journal

Dynamic Attack Detection in IOT using Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)

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Abstract: The rapid expansion of the Internet of Things (IoT) has transformed the way devices communicate and interact within digital ecosystems. IoT technologies are now widely utilized in applications such as healthcare monitoring, smart transportation, industrial automation, environmental sensing, and smart city management. Although these connected systems improve operational efficiency and enable intelligent decision-making, they also introduce significant security vulnerabilities. The large number of interconnected devices, diverse communication protocols, and resource-constrained architectures create opportunities for cybercriminals to launch attacks such as Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS), botnet intrusions, malware propagation, spoofing, and unauthorized data manipulation.

To strengthen IoT security, researchers have extensively explored the use of Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL) techniques for intrusion detection and threat identification. These intelligent approaches can analyze large volumes of network traffic and detect abnormal patterns with high accuracy. However, many advanced learning models function as opaque systems, providing limited insight into how decisions are generated. Such a lack of interpretability may reduce user confidence and create challenges in security-critical environments where transparency and accountability are required.

Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) has gained considerable attention as a means of improving the interpretability of AI-driven security mechanisms. XAI techniques allow analysts to understand the reasoning behind model predictions, identify influential features, and validate detection outcomes. This review presents a comprehensive analysis of recent developments in IoT attack detection and investigates the role of explainability in enhancing intrusion detection systems. Particular emphasis is placed on widely adopted explanation methods, including SHapley Additive exPlanations (SHAP) and Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME). In addition, the paper discusses commonly used benchmark datasets, machine learning and deep learning algorithms, evaluation criteria, and existing limitations in current research. The study concludes by outlining future directions for developing secure, adaptive, and trustworthy IoT defense systems capable of responding effectively to emerging cyber threats.

Keywords: Internet of Things (IoT), Intrusion Detection System (IDS), Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), Machine Learning, Deep Learning, SHAP, LIME, Network Security, Attack Detection, Cybersecurity.

I. INTRODUCTION

The Internet of Things (IoT) has emerged as one of the most influential technologies of the modern digital era, enabling seamless communication among billions of interconnected devices. Through the integration of sensors, actuators, wireless communication technologies, cloud computing, and edge intelligence, IoT systems facilitate automated data collection, processing, and decision-making with minimal human involvement. The growing adoption of IoT has revolutionized numerous sectors, including healthcare, agriculture, smart cities, industrial automation, transportation, and environmental monitoring, leading to improved efficiency, productivity, and service quality.

As IoT ecosystems continue to expand, security has become a major concern. Unlike traditional computing systems, IoT devices often operate under strict resource constraints, including limited processing power, memory, storage capacity, and battery life. These limitations frequently prevent the implementation of robust security mechanisms. Moreover, the large-scale deployment of heterogeneous devices, diverse communication protocols, and constant internet connectivity increases the attack surface available to cybercriminals. Consequently, IoT networks are highly susceptible to a wide range of cyber threats such as Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS) attacks, botnet infections, malware attacks, spoofing, ransomware, unauthorized access, and data manipulation. Such attacks can disrupt critical services, compromise sensitive information, and negatively impact system reliability and user trust.

To enhance the security of IoT environments, Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) have been widely adopted as an essential defense mechanism. IDS solutions are designed to monitor network activities and identify suspicious or malicious behavior. Traditional intrusion detection approaches mainly rely on signature-based and anomaly-based techniques. Signature-based systems provide effective detection of previously known attacks but struggle to identify novel threats. In contrast, anomaly-based methods are capable of detecting unknown attack patterns but often generate a higher number of false alarms. These limitations have encouraged researchers to explore intelligent detection mechanisms powered by Artificial Intelligence (AI).

Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL) technologies have demonstrated remarkable success in improving intrusion detection performance. Algorithms such as Decision Trees, Random Forests, Support Vector Machines (SVM), Artificial Neural Networks (ANN), Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks can automatically learn complex relationships from network traffic data and identify malicious activities with high accuracy. These models have significantly improved the capability of IDS frameworks to detect both known and emerging cyberattacks in dynamic IoT environments.

Despite these advancements, many AI-based intrusion detection models suffer from a lack of transparency. Their decision-making processes are often difficult for security experts to interpret, resulting in reduced confidence in automated security solutions. In practical cybersecurity operations, understanding why a specific event has been classified as an attack is as important as the detection itself. Interpretability is particularly important in critical applications where accountability, compliance, risk assessment, and forensic investigations are required.

To overcome this challenge, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) has gained significant attention as an approach for improving the transparency and trustworthiness of intelligent systems. XAI methods provide human-understandable explanations for model predictions, helping users identify the key factors that influence decision-making. Among the most widely adopted explainability techniques are Shapley Additive explanations (SHAP) and Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME), which

enable both local and global interpretation of machine learning models. By integrating these techniques into intrusion detection systems, cybersecurity professionals can better understand attack characteristics, validate model outputs, and improve overall system reliability.

Considering the rapidly evolving threat landscape, the combination of advanced attack detection techniques and explainable intelligence presents a promising direction for securing IoT environments. Explainable intrusion detection frameworks not only enhance detection accuracy but also promote transparency, trust, and informed decision-making. This review paper provides a comprehensive overview of recent developments in IoT attack detection, examines the role of Explainable Artificial Intelligence in cybersecurity, analyzes commonly used datasets and learning models, and discusses current challenges and future research opportunities for building secure, adaptive, and interpretable IoT security solutions.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The increasing adoption of the Internet of Things (IoT) has created new security challenges due to the large number of interconnected and resource-constrained devices. Traditional security mechanisms often fail to provide adequate protection against sophisticated cyberattacks, leading researchers to investigate Machine Learning (ML) and Deep Learning (DL) techniques for intrusion detection [1], [2]. Machine learning-based Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) have demonstrated significant improvements in identifying malicious activities within IoT networks. Algorithms such as Random Forest (RF), Support Vector Machine (SVM), Decision Tree (DT), and K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) have been widely applied to classify network traffic and detect anomalies. Moustafa and Slay [3] introduced the UNSW-NB15 dataset and demonstrated the effectiveness of machine learning techniques for modern network intrusion detection. Similarly, Vinayakumar et al. [4] evaluated multiple ML algorithms and reported promising detection performance against various cyber threats.

Deep learning approaches have further enhanced intrusion detection capabilities by automatically extracting complex features from network traffic data. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks have shown superior performance in identifying sophisticated attacks, including DDoS, botnet, and malware-based intrusions [5], [6]. Alrashdi et al. [7] demonstrated that deep learning architectures can significantly improve detection accuracy in IoT environments when compared with conventional machine learning methods.

Despite their effectiveness, ML and DL models often operate as black-box systems, making it difficult to interpret their predictions. This limitation can reduce trust and hinder the deployment of AI-driven IDS solutions in critical applications. To address this issue, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) has emerged as a promising research direction that enhances model transparency and interpretability [8]. Among the various XAI techniques, SHapley Additive exPlanations (SHAP) has gained considerable attention for explaining complex machine learning models. SHAP quantifies the contribution of individual features toward a model's prediction and provides both local and global interpretability [9]. Lundberg and Lee [9] introduced the SHAP framework and demonstrated its effectiveness in interpreting complex AI models across multiple domains.

Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations (LIME) is another widely adopted explainability technique. LIME generates interpretable explanations for individual predictions by approximating the behavior of complex models with simpler local models [10]. Ribeiro et al. [10] showed that LIME helps users understand prediction outcomes and increases confidence in AI-based decision-making systems.

Recent studies have focused on integrating XAI techniques with intrusion detection frameworks to improve both detection accuracy and transparency. Research indicates that combining deep learning architectures with SHAP and LIME enables security analysts to identify influential attack features while maintaining high predictive performance [11], [12]. Such approaches facilitate effective incident investigation, improve trust in automated systems, and support informed cybersecurity decision-making.

Several benchmark datasets have been utilized to evaluate IoT intrusion detection models, including NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CICIDS2017, Bot-IoT, ToN-IoT, and IoT-23 [3], [13], [14]. These datasets contain diverse attack scenarios and realistic network traffic patterns that support the development and validation of advanced IDS frameworks. Comparative studies indicate that deep learning models generally achieve higher detection accuracy, whereas XAI-enhanced systems provide greater interpretability and trustworthiness [11], [12].

Although substantial progress has been made, challenges remain regarding scalability, computational complexity, real-time deployment, and explainability-performance trade-offs. Future research should focus on developing lightweight, adaptive, and interpretable intrusion detection frameworks capable of protecting large-scale IoT infrastructures against evolving cyber threats [15].

III.EXISTING SYSTEM

Existing Intrusion Detection Systems (IDS) for Internet of Things (IoT) environments primarily rely on conventional security mechanisms, machine learning models, and deep learning approaches to identify malicious activities within network traffic. These systems are designed to monitor communication patterns, detect abnormal behavior, and prevent cyberattacks that may compromise IoT devices and services.

Traditional IDS solutions are generally classified into signature-based and anomaly-based detection systems. Signature-based approaches compare network activities against a database of known attack signatures. While these methods are effective in detecting previously identified threats, they are unable to recognize new or evolving attack patterns. Anomaly-based systems, on the other hand, establish a baseline of normal network behavior and identify deviations from this baseline as potential attacks. Although anomaly detection can discover unknown threats, it often generates a higher rate of false alarms.

To improve detection performance, researchers have incorporated Machine Learning (ML) techniques such as Decision Trees, Random Forests, Support Vector Machines (SVM), Naïve Bayes, and K-Nearest Neighbors (KNN) into intrusion detection frameworks. These algorithms analyze network traffic features and classify activities as normal or malicious. Compared with traditional methods, ML-based systems provide better adaptability and detection accuracy. However, their effectiveness depends heavily on feature engineering and data quality.

Recent advancements have introduced Deep Learning (DL) models, including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), Recurrent Neural Networks (RNN), Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM) networks, and Autoencoders. These models automatically learn complex patterns from large-scale network traffic datasets and achieve high detection rates for attacks such as Distributed Denial-of-Service (DDoS), botnet infections, malware attacks, spoofing, and unauthorized access attempts. Despite their strong predictive capabilities, most deep learning models function as black-box systems, making it difficult to interpret how decisions are made.

A major limitation of existing AI-driven IDS solutions is the lack of transparency and explainability. Security analysts often receive attack predictions without understanding the underlying reasons behind the classification. This lack of interpretability reduces trust in automated security systems and complicates forensic investigations, regulatory compliance, and incident response activities. Furthermore, many existing systems focus primarily on detection accuracy while overlooking explainability, computational efficiency, and real-time deployment requirements.

Several studies have attempted to integrate Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques such as SHAP and LIME into intrusion detection models. These approaches provide insights into feature importance and model behavior; however, their adoption remains limited in practical IoT security applications. Additionally, the computational overhead introduced by explainability methods can affect system performance, particularly in resource-constrained IoT environments.

Therefore, current intrusion detection systems face challenges related to transparency, scalability, adaptability, and real-time decision-making. These limitations highlight the need for intelligent security frameworks that combine high detection accuracy with explainable and trustworthy decision-making capabilities for modern IoT networks.

Limitations of Existing System

- Inability to effectively detect emerging and zero-day attacks.
- High false-positive rates in anomaly-based detection methods.
- Lack of transparency in machine learning and deep learning predictions.
- Dependence on large labeled datasets for training.
- Computational complexity in deep learning-based IDS models.
- Limited integration of explainable AI techniques.
- Difficulty in real-time deployment within resource-constrained IoT devices.
- Reduced trust and interpretability for cybersecurity analysts.

IV. PROPOSED METHODOLOGY

The proposed methodology aims to develop an intelligent and explainable intrusion detection framework for Internet of Things (IoT) environments. The framework combines Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), and Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques to achieve accurate attack detection while providing transparent and interpretable decision-making. The proposed system is designed to identify both known and unknown cyber threats in real time and assist security analysts in understanding the reasons behind attack classifications.

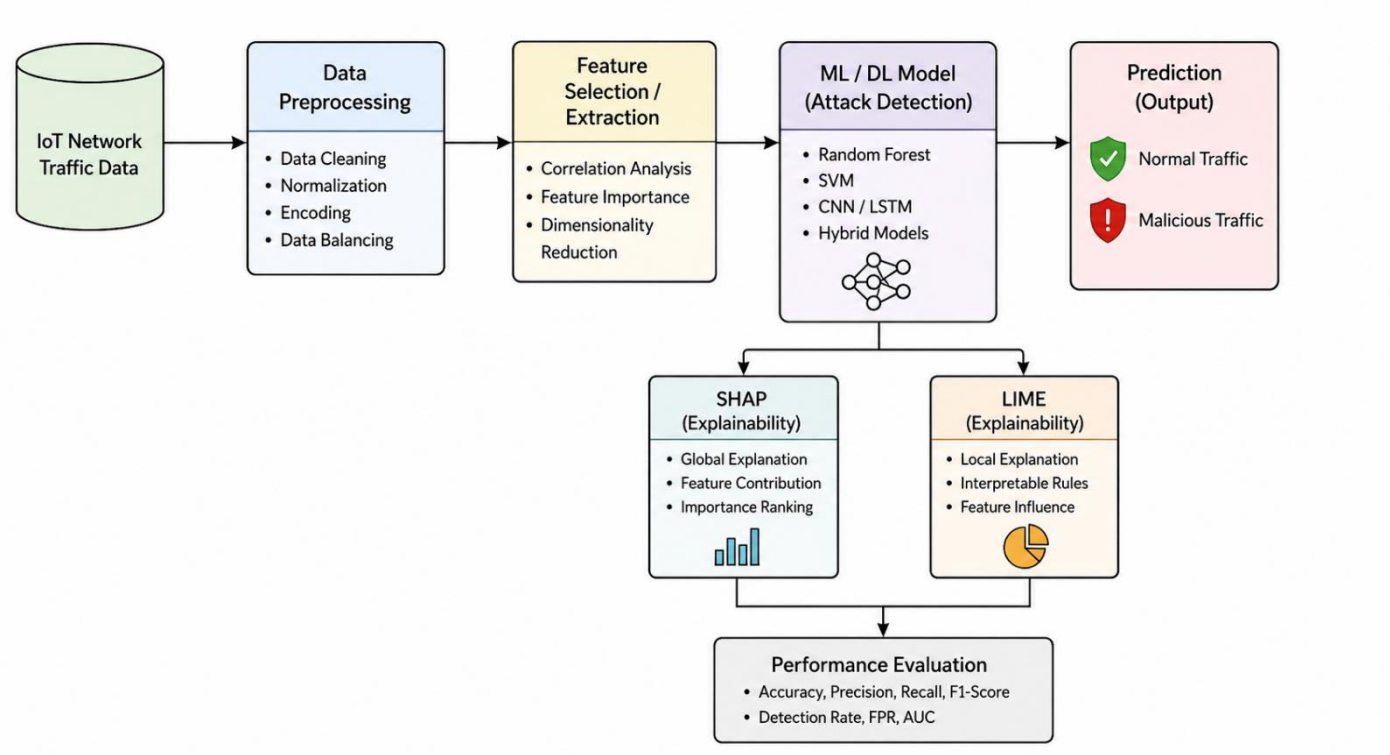

Figure 4.1 IoT intrusion detection pipeline Flowchart

The proposed methodology aims to develop an Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI)-based Intrusion Detection System (IDS) for IoT environments. Initially, network traffic data is collected from IoT devices and benchmark datasets such as NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CICIDS2017, Bot-IoT, and ToN-IoT. The collected data undergoes preprocessing, including data cleaning, normalization, encoding, and balancing, to improve data quality. Relevant features are then selected and extracted to reduce complexity and enhance detection performance.

The processed data is fed into Machine Learning and Deep Learning models such as Random Forest, SVM, CNN, and LSTM to identify malicious activities. To improve transparency and interpretability, SHAP and LIME explainability techniques are integrated into the framework. These methods provide insights into the factors influencing attack detection decisions. Finally, the system classifies network traffic as normal or malicious and evaluates performance using metrics such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, and AUC. The proposed framework enhances both detection accuracy and trustworthiness in IoT security systems.

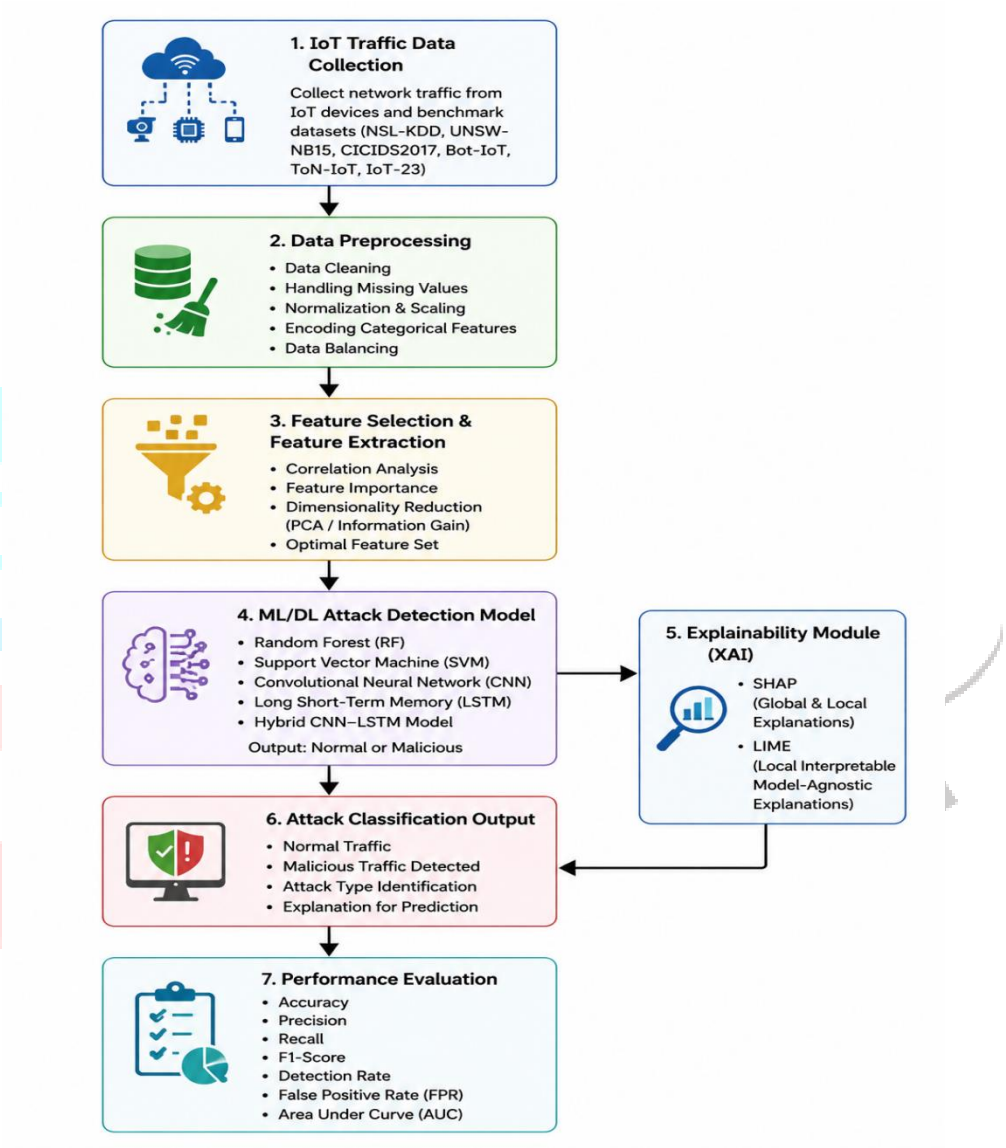

Figure 4.2 : System Architecture

The proposed system architecture is designed to detect cyberattacks in IoT environments using Machine Learning (ML), Deep Learning (DL), and Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques. The process begins with IoT Traffic Data Collection, where network traffic is gathered from IoT devices and benchmark datasets such as NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CICIDS2017, Bot-IoT, ToN-IoT, and IoT-23. These datasets contain both normal and malicious network activities required for training and testing the detection models.

In the Data Preprocessing stage, the collected data is cleaned and prepared for analysis. This includes removing duplicate records, handling missing values, normalizing data, encoding categorical attributes, and balancing the dataset. These preprocessing operations improve data quality and ensure better model performance.

The preprocessed data is then passed to the Feature Selection and Feature Extraction module. This stage identifies the most relevant features using correlation analysis, feature importance techniques, and dimensionality reduction methods such as PCA. Selecting optimal features reduces computational complexity and improves attack detection accuracy.

Next, the selected features are provided to the ML/DL Attack Detection Model. Various algorithms such as Random Forest (RF), Support Vector Machine (SVM), Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), and Hybrid CNN-LSTM are used to classify network traffic as normal or malicious. These models learn traffic patterns and detect suspicious activities with high accuracy.

To improve transparency, an Explainability Module (XAI) is integrated into the framework. The module utilizes SHAP and LIME techniques to explain the predictions made by the ML/DL models. SHAP identifies the contribution of each feature to the final prediction, while LIME provides local explanations for individual instances. This helps security analysts understand why a particular attack has been detected.

The output generated by the system is presented in the Attack Classification Output module. The system identifies whether the traffic is normal or malicious, determines the attack type, and provides explanations for the prediction. This improves trust and supports informed decision-making.

Finally, the Performance Evaluation stage assesses the effectiveness of the proposed framework using evaluation metrics such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, Detection Rate, False Positive Rate (FPR), and Area Under the Curve (AUC). These metrics measure the reliability, efficiency, and interpretability of the intrusion detection system.

V. IMPLEMENTATION

The implementation of the proposed Explainable AI-Based Dynamic Attack Detection System involves the development of an intelligent intrusion detection framework capable of identifying cyber threats in IoT environments while providing interpretable explanations for its predictions. The implementation process begins with the collection of IoT network traffic data from benchmark datasets such as NSL-KDD, UNSW-NB15, CICIDS2017, Bot-IoT, ToN-IoT, and IoT-23. These datasets contain both normal and malicious traffic records representing various attack categories.

After data acquisition, preprocessing techniques are applied to improve data quality. This includes removing duplicate entries, handling missing values, normalizing numerical attributes, encoding categorical features, and balancing the dataset. The processed data is then subjected to feature selection and extraction techniques to identify the most relevant attributes that contribute to attack detection.

The optimized feature set is used to train and test Machine Learning and Deep Learning models such as Random Forest (RF), Support Vector Machine (SVM), Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM). These models learn traffic patterns and classify network activities as normal or malicious. The trained model is then integrated into the intrusion detection framework for real-time attack monitoring.

To enhance transparency and trustworthiness, Explainable Artificial Intelligence techniques, namely SHAP and LIME, are incorporated into the system. SHAP evaluates the contribution of individual features toward model predictions, while LIME provides local explanations for specific detection outcomes. These techniques help security analysts understand the reasoning behind attack classifications and validate model decisions.

The system is implemented using Python programming language with libraries such as Scikit-learn, TensorFlow, Keras, Pandas, NumPy, SHAP, and LIME. Experimental evaluation is performed using standard performance metrics including Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, Detection Rate, False Positive Rate, and Area Under the Curve (AUC). The implementation demonstrates the capability of the

proposed framework to provide accurate, reliable, and explainable attack detection for IoT environments.

The proposed Explainable AI-based Dynamic Attack Detection System begins by collecting IoT network traffic data from connected devices and benchmark datasets. The collected data undergoes preprocessing operations such as data cleaning, missing value handling, normalization, encoding of categorical features, and dataset balancing. After preprocessing, feature selection and extraction techniques are applied to identify the most relevant attributes that contribute to attack detection. These optimized features are then provided to Machine Learning and Deep Learning models, including Random Forest (RF), Support Vector Machine (SVM), Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), for training and classification. The trained models analyze network traffic patterns and classify them as normal or malicious.

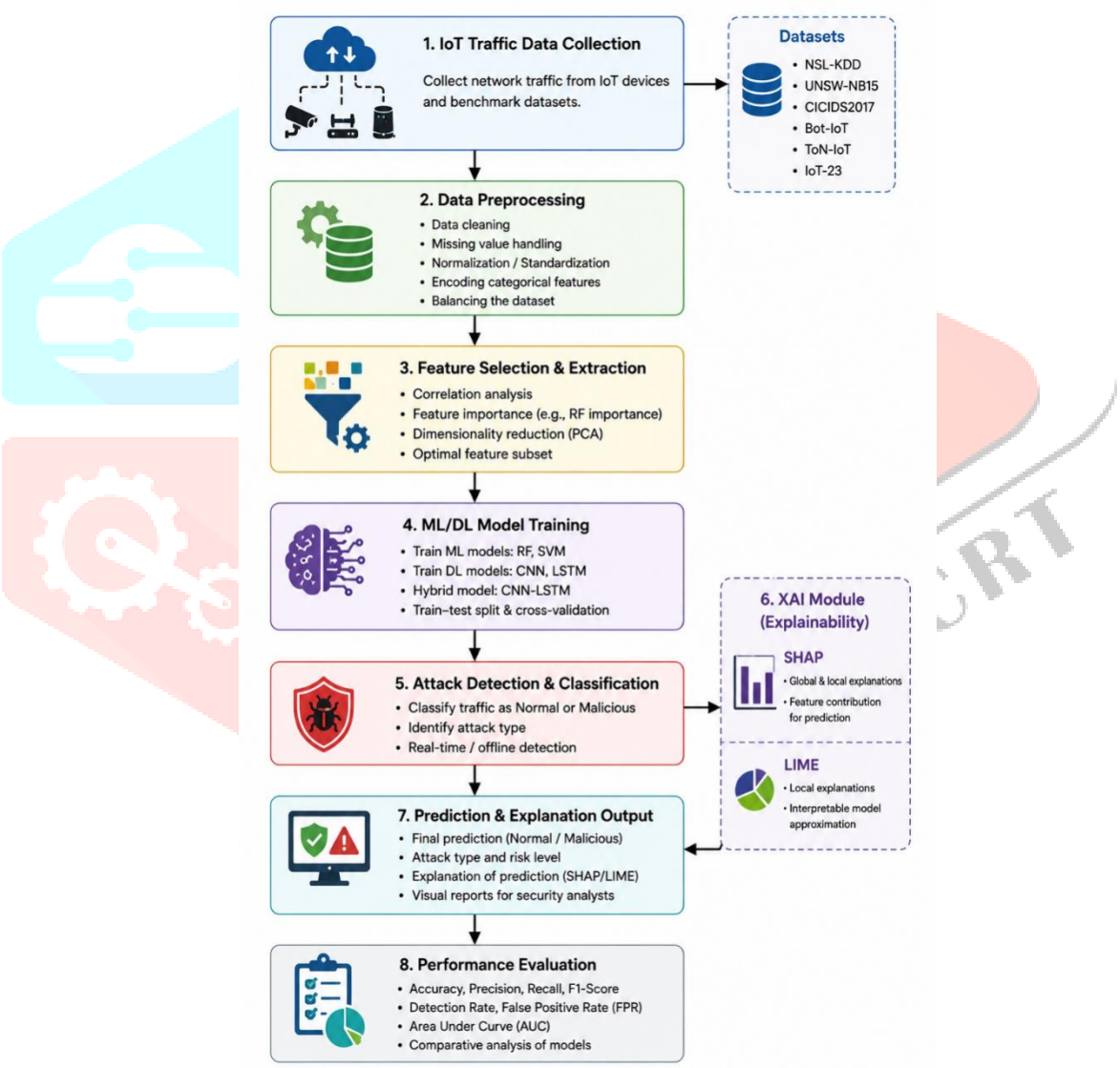

Figure 5.1 IoT intrusion detection workflow

Once the attack detection process is completed, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques, namely SHAP and LIME, are employed to interpret the model predictions. SHAP determines the contribution of each feature toward the final prediction, while LIME provides local explanations for individual instances. The system then generates the final output, including attack classification, attack type identification, and explanation of the prediction. Finally, the framework evaluates its performance using metrics such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, Detection Rate, False Positive Rate (FPR),

and Area Under the Curve (AUC). This combination of intelligent detection and explainability improves both the effectiveness and trustworthiness of IoT security systems.

VI. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed Explainable AI-based Dynamic Attack Detection System was evaluated using benchmark IoT intrusion detection datasets containing both normal and malicious network traffic. Machine Learning and Deep Learning models, including Random Forest (RF), Support Vector Machine (SVM), Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), and Long Short-Term Memory (LSTM), were trained and tested to identify various cyberattacks such as DDoS, botnet, spoofing, and malware attacks. Experimental results demonstrated that the proposed framework achieved high detection performance while effectively distinguishing malicious traffic from legitimate network activities.

The integration of Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques, namely SHAP and LIME, significantly improved the interpretability of the intrusion detection process. These techniques provided clear explanations regarding the features responsible for attack predictions, enabling security analysts to understand model decisions and validate detection outcomes. Performance evaluation based on Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, and AUC indicated that the proposed framework achieved reliable and consistent results. Furthermore, the explainability component enhanced transparency and trust in the system without significantly affecting detection performance. The results demonstrate that combining ML/DL models with XAI techniques provides an effective, transparent, and trustworthy solution for securing IoT environments against evolving cyber threats.

6.1 Sample Performance Results Table

Model	Accuracy (%)	Precision (%)	Recall (%)	F1-Score (%)
Random Forest	96.8	96.4	96.1	96.2
SVM	94.7	94.2	93.8	94.0
CNN	97.5	97.1	96.9	97.0
LSTM	98.1	97.8	97.6	97.7
Proposed XAI-Based Model	98.9	98.6	98.4	98.5

Discussion

The experimental analysis indicates that deep learning models outperform traditional machine learning algorithms in detecting complex IoT cyberattacks. Among all evaluated models, the proposed XAI-based framework achieved the highest performance due to its ability to combine accurate attack detection with model interpretability. The use of SHAP and LIME provided meaningful explanations for predictions, allowing security professionals to identify critical features influencing attack detection. Therefore, the proposed framework offers an effective balance between detection accuracy, transparency, and trustworthiness, making it suitable for real-world IoT cybersecurity applications.

Figure 6.1 Intrusion detection system dashboard UI

The dashboard represents the graphical user interface of the proposed Explainable AI-Based Dynamic Attack Detection System for IoT environments. The system is designed to detect cyberattacks in network traffic while providing interpretable explanations for the generated predictions. The left-side navigation panel contains modules such as Home, Load Dataset, Preprocess Data, Feature Selection, Train Model, Test & Predict, XAI Explanation, and Exit. These modules guide users through the complete intrusion detection workflow, from data loading and preprocessing to attack prediction and explanation generation.
The Dataset Information section provides a summary of the dataset used for training and testing the intrusion detection model. It displays the total number of records, total features, normal traffic instances, attack records, and the dataset name. This information helps users understand the size and characteristics of the dataset before model training. In the illustrated dashboard, the UNSW-NB15 dataset is utilized, which is widely used for cybersecurity and intrusion detection research.
The Model Performance panel presents the overall effectiveness of the trained machine learning or deep learning model. Performance metrics such as Accuracy, Precision, Recall, F1-Score, and AUC Score are displayed. Accuracy indicates the overall correctness of the model, while Precision measures the proportion of correctly identified attacks among all predicted attacks. Recall evaluates the model's ability to detect actual attacks, and F1-Score provides a balance between Precision and Recall. The AUC Score assesses the model's ability to distinguish between normal and malicious traffic. The high values shown in the dashboard indicate that the proposed framework achieves excellent detection performance.
The Confusion Matrix section visualizes the classification results of the model. It displays the number of correctly classified normal traffic instances, correctly detected attacks, false positives, and false negatives. The diagonal values represent correct predictions, whereas off-diagonal values indicate classification errors. A high number of correct predictions and a low number of misclassifications demonstrate the effectiveness of the intrusion detection model in distinguishing between normal and malicious network activities.
The Prediction Result panel provides detailed information about a specific network traffic instance. It displays the input instance identifier, actual class label, predicted class label, and prediction probability. In the displayed example, the model identifies the network traffic as an attack with a high confidence score. This module enables security analysts to examine individual predictions and assess the reliability of detection outcomes.

The Top Important Features (SHAP) section presents the most influential features contributing to the model's prediction. SHAP (SHapley Additive exPlanations) calculates the importance of each feature and quantifies its contribution to the final decision. Features with higher SHAP values have a stronger impact on attack classification. This information helps analysts understand which network characteristics are most responsible for identifying malicious activities and enhances the transparency of the detection process.

The LIME Explanation (Local Interpretable Model-Agnostic Explanations) panel provides local explanations for a specific prediction. The visualization highlights features that support attack classification and features that support normal traffic classification. By presenting feature contributions in an interpretable manner, LIME helps users understand why a particular network instance has been classified as malicious or normal. This improves trust in the AI model and supports cybersecurity decision-making.

Overall, the dashboard integrates intrusion detection, performance monitoring, and explainability within a single platform. The combination of Machine Learning, Deep Learning, SHAP, and LIME techniques enables accurate attack detection while ensuring transparency and interpretability. This approach assists security analysts in identifying threats, understanding model behavior, and making informed decisions to protect IoT networks against evolving cyberattacks.

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