

# BANGLA HANDWRITTEN CHARACTER RECOGNITION USING CONVOLUTION NEURAL NETWORK

Shankha De and Arpana Rawal

Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Bhilai Institute of Technology, India

## Abstract

Since, last one-decade, numerous deep learning models have been designed to resolve handwritten character recognition task in languages, namely, English, Chinese, Arabic, Japanese and Russian. Recognition of Bengali handwritten character from document image datasets is undoubtedly an open challenging task. Due to the advancement of neural network, many models have been developed and it is improving performance. The LeNet is a pioneering work in the field handwritten document image recognition specially hand written digits from the images by using CNN. This paper focuses on designing a convolution neural network with refinements on layers and its parameter tuning for Bengali character recognition system for classification of 50 different fonts. Our revised CNN model outperforms on some existing approach and shows font-recognition accuracy of 98.46%.

## Keywords:

Convolution Neural Network, Handwritten Character, LeNet

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Most of the OCR research work concerned European, Arabic, Chinese and Japanese scripts [1]-[9]. In recent years, due to the advancement of machine learning and deep learning techniques, researchers are using MLP and CNN based classification techniques for character recognition of various languages. But it needs high configuration system and large number of training dataset. Among Indian Script, Bengali script is remained open active research area. Complexity in graphics structure and similarity of some characters makes Bengali script a more challenging. Success rate of printed text recognition is always better than handwritten character recognition.

Various conventional approaches are already designed made for developing Bangla character recognition system. Syntactic approach, Template matching, Hidden Markov Model, Support vector machine and Multi-layered Perceptron based ANN techniques has been used in both, print (digitized) character and handwritten (scanned) character recognition domains.

It was realized that print character classification models were much easier to implement than hand-written character recognition models owing to the challenges raised by scripting font styles, sizes, shapes and stroking components. As a result, averagely satisfactory performance of these approaches paved way to much more scopes of variant simulation deep-learning modeling of font-classification models. This paper proposed a CNN model which is capable to recognize handwritten Bengali characters with sufficiently high accuracies (98.46%) applied on standard CMATERdb 3.1.2 dataset [10]-[15].

This paper is organized as follows: section 2 describes use of various machine learning approaches of Bengali Script recognition process. Section 3 gives basic concept and components description of convolution neural network. Section 4

describes details of CNN model experimental setup and data set used. Section 5 shows experimental results followed by the conclusion of this experiments and its future scope.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Recent implementations in deep learning (DL) based handwritten font-classification approaches have resulted in implementation of highly efficient hand-written character-recognition models. In this section various recent research paper is reviewed where CNN is applied in many other languages for character recognition. Success rate of recognizing English, Chinese, Japanese, Russian and even Arabic script is noticeable in compare with Indic scripts. Among Indic script, Hindi, Tamil, Gujrati, Oriya and Bengali scripts recognition has been started and getting acceptable accuracy rate. But till date it is an open area for exploring new methods and techniques to improve result.

Bengali Character Recognition process accelerated by Choudhary and Pal [16] by their approach for developing a complete Bengali OCR system for printed character [16]. In continuation with Pal [17] uses water reservoir techniques for unconstrained character recognition.

Bhowmik et al. [18] applied MLP based classifier on stroke features for recognizing handwritten character set and achieved around 84% of accuracy. Basu et al. [19] uses MLP based classifier on 76 different features based on longest run, centroid and shadow features which gives around 75% of accuracy. Advancement of machine learning CNN is also playing an important role for Bengali handwritten script recognition. Various CNN based model has been developed in Bengali handwritten character recognition.

Rahaman et al. [20] achieved 85% accuracy using CNN. Rabby et al. [21] [22] have designed BornoNet and Ekushnet to identify handwritten Bengali fonts using convolution neural network and achieves 95.71% to 98% accuracy in various dataset like ISI, Banglalekha, CMATERdb. Some researchers achieved more accuracy rate using CNN by their own dataset.

Rizvi et al. [23] proposed a hybrid feature extraction method by applying zoning along with density, zone centroid and histogram of gradient features to create a feature vector of size 26. A 2-D sobel mask is used for gradient magnitude and orientation calculation. Cell histogram of 9 bins, varies from 0 to 180°, each bin of 20° is calculated by applying weighted votes. The feature set feed to SVM and CNN (ResNet 18) achieved 87% and 98.04% accuracy. Chatterjee et al. [24] achieves accuracy of 96.12% in 47 epochs by Resnet 50.

Khandokar et al. [25] achieves 92.91% accuracy on NIST dataset whereas Hasan et al. [26] proposed a low-cost convolution neural network for Bengali character recognition. This paper

proposed a CNN model to improve accuracy and achieved 98.46% on standard dataset CMATERdb 3.1.2.

### 3. CNN MODEL FUNCTIONALITY

CNN is one of most used advanced models of neural network. It is made up of huge number of neurons that are interconnected and divided into three layers as input layers which takes user input data passes to next layer, multiple hidden layers used to learn non-linear combination of features to classify or predict object and output layers produces final output. Basic components of any CNN are [9] [27]:

- **Input Layer:** Work as a buffer to takes input data and passes to next layer.
- **Convolution Layer:** Performs feature extraction by moving the kernel over input and found sum of product for each location.
- **Rectified Linear Unit:** An activation function that imposes non linearity as well as convert negative value to 0 that improves learning process.
- **Pooling Layer:** Max pooling and average pooling manipulate spatial size of feature to improve computation and accuracy by extracting more traits. Max pooling works better in presence of noise.

Suppose an input image size  $n \times n$ . Convolution filter size is  $(f \times f)$ , padding  $p$ , stride  $s$ , the number of filter is  $k$ , Image features are extracted and matched by sub sampling the image size by using the Eq.(1).

$$m = ((n+2p-f)/s)+1 \tag{1}$$

The resulting image size will be  $k @ m \times m$  [28].

A simple CNN architecture is represented in Fig.1 that can be used for Bengali handwritten character recognition. Suppose it takes a  $32 \times 32$ -pixel image as an input. The architecture uses two convolution layers, two pooling layer and one flat layer followed by two fully connected layer and a softmax layer as a final classifier.

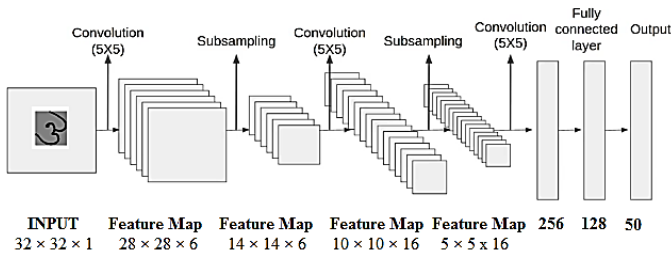


Fig.1. Components of a CNN model

For gray scale image, number of color channel is one, so the input image is a  $32 \times 32 \times 1$  image for the input layer as shown in the Fig.1. First convolution layer uses a 6 filters of size  $5 \times 5$  filter and stride as 1 and, the output image size will be  $(32-5+1) \times (32-5+1) \times 6 = 28 \times 28 \times 6$  as number of channels is equal to number of filters. In pooling layers using averaging operation i.e. Average pooling layers reduces the feature map to half as  $14 \times 14 \times 6$  keeping the number of channels intact. Next convolution layer uses sixteen filter with kernel size  $5 \times 5$  that again reduces feature map to  $10 \times 10 \times 16$ . Next sub sampling layer will convert it to  $5 \times 5 \times 16$ . Then final convolution layer having 256 filter of size  $5 \times 5$  makes

$1 \times 1 \times 256$  feature map that flatten converts to a 256 value. Then a fully connected layer of 128 neurons and at last output layer of 50 neurons for 50 different class of hand written character fonts.

CNN model takes input character image, extract different local features using learnable weights and biases and categorizes to predefined classes. It is performing well in object recognition as well as in character recognition system.

### 4. DATASET AND FRAMEWORK

The proposed model is using standard dataset which consist of 50 individual Bengali handwritten character set that are labeled properly. It contains two different datasets, one as a training dataset of 12000 handwritten characters for different shape, 240 different sample images in each font class, are considered and another dataset of 3000 images, 60 sample image for each class, for testing purpose. Another important feature is that all images are noise free. All these image set are grouped and labeled to 50 different folders from 0 to 49 for 50 different classes.

The implementation of our revised CNN model is found to perform feature extraction step that is invariant of scaling, rotation as well as robust to other distortions. This makes the revised CNN model to skip inevitable image document preprocessing stages unlike in traditional character recognition processing stages. Our model consisted of two parts, the pre-trained ResNet-34 part and our custom model. Pre-trained part contains sequential 34 layers of sequential and basic blocks. First convolution layer uses kernel size 7 with feature map 64 and 33 padding. It is followed by  $3 \times 3$  convolutions and feature map dimension vary from [64.128.256.512]. Function Adam at  $0x00000186CDCF8CA0$  optimizer is used and loss functions are FlattenedLoss of CrossEntropyLoss(). Model unfrozen Callbacks are TrainEvalCallback, Recorder and ProgressCallback. Custom part contains AdaptiveConcatPool2d, Flatten, Relu, 2 BatchNorm1d, 2 Dropout and 2 Linear layers.

### 5. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Fastai library and Python version 3.9.6 are used for coding and the model facilitates with different input image sizes as it has AdaptiveConcatPool2d layers which re-adjust the shape/size of the data. The training set consisted of 50 classes, each of which had 240 images each.

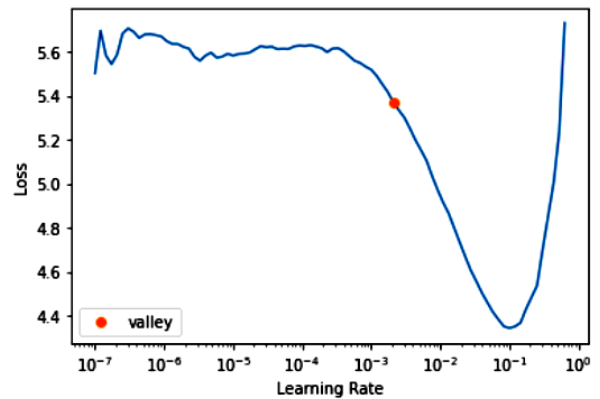


Fig.2. Learning Rate of the Model





Also, other hyper-parameters for fine tuning functionality of CNN model variants may include pool size and learning rate. The hybridization feature can also be incorporated by using different activation functions in different operational layers. The major strengths of using CNN model frequently by ML researchers is that it supports high noise tolerance levels with meager level of (image) data preprocessing. In future, this model is anticipated to be run upon online real-time datasets.

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