Applied Science & Engineering Journal for Advanced Research
ISSN (Online): 2583-2468
Volume-2 Issue-3 || May 2023 || PP. 8-9 DOI: 10.54741/asejar.2.3.3

Design and Development of Underground Cable Fault Location

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Received: 02-05-2023	Revised: 18-05-2023	Accepted: 30-05-2023

ABSTRACT
This abstract presents an overview of the design and development of an underground cable fault detector. The system aims to provide an efficient and reliable solution for detecting faults in underground power cables, facilitating quick identification and repair of faults to ensure uninterrupted power supply. The underground cable fault detector comprises several essential components and functionalities. It incorporates sensors, data processing algorithms and a user interface for fault detection and localization. The sensors are deployed along the underground cable network to monitor parameters such as voltage, current. The data processing algorithms analyse the sensor data in real-time to identify abnormal patterns and deviations that indicate cable faults. These algorithms employ advanced signal processing techniques, pattern recognition, and fault signature analysis to distinguish between normal cable operation and fault conditions. The fault detector system also includes a user interface which provides visual indications to alert operators about the presence and location of cable faults. The interface may display fault information such as fault type and distance from the detection point to aid in efficient fault location and repair. During the design and development process, considerations are given to factors such as system sensitivity, accuracy, and reliability. Extensive testing and validation procedures are conducted to ensure the system's performance under various fault scenarios and environmental conditions.

Keywords: *faults, detector, location, underground*

I. INTRODUCTION

The design and development of an underground cable fault detector is a crucial aspect of maintaining reliable power distribution networks. Underground power cables are susceptible to various faults such as insulation breakdown, conductor damage, and short circuits. Detecting and localizing these faults promptly is essential to minimize downtime, prevent power outages and ensure uninterrupted power supply. Traditional methods of fault detection and localization in underground cables involve time-consuming manual inspections and fault location using cumbersome techniques. These methods often result in prolonged downtime and increased repair costs. Therefore, there is a growing need for an efficient and automated system that can accurately detect and locate faults in underground power cables. The design and development of an underground cable fault detector address these challenges by incorporating advanced technologies and methodologies. This system aims to provide real-time monitoring and precise fault localization capabilities, enabling swift and targeted repair actions.

II. WORKING

This project is to determine the distance of cable fault from the base station in kilometres. A cable system is quite common in many urban areas wherein it becomes very difficult to repair in case of any faults because finding the exact location of the fault in such cable system is quite difficult. With the proposed system, finding the exact location of the fault is possible. This project uses a standard concept of Ohms law, i.e., when a low DC voltage is applied at the feeder end through series resistor (assuming them as cable lines), then the current would vary depending upon the location of the fault in the cable. In case of a short circuit (line to ground), the voltage across the series resistors changes which is then fed to an ADC, to develop a precise digital data that gets displayed on the LCD. The project is assembled with a set of resistors representing cable length in km and fault creation is made by a set of switches at every known km to cross check the accuracy of the same. The fault that occurs at a particular distance of a particular phase is displayed on the LCD interfaced to the microcontroller. Furthermore, this project can be enhanced by using a capacitor in an AC circuit to measure the impedance which can even locate an open-circuited cable, unlike short-circuited fault only using resistors in DC circuit as followed in the above proposed project. While any of the 9 switches (representing as fault switches) are operated they impose conditions like line to ground (LG), line to line (LL), line to line to line (3L) fault as per the switch operation. The program while executed continuously scans by operating the 3relays in sequence of 1sec interval. Thus, any NO point while driven to GND through the common contact point of the relay develops a current flow through R1 & any of the cable by the fault switch depending on the created fault. Thus, the voltage drop at the analog to digital (ADC) pin varies depending on the current flow which is inversely proportional to the resistance value representing the length of cable in kilometres. This varying voltage is fed to the ADC to develop an 8-bit data to the microcontroller port1. Program while executed displays an Output in the LCD display upon the distance of the fault occurring in km. In a fault situation Its display's R=3km if the 3km's switch is made ON. Accordingly, all other faults are indicated.

III. MAIN COMPONENTS LIST

a. Arduino Nano
b. Copper Clad PCB
c. Relays
d. Resistor
e. Power Adaptor
f. 16x2 LCD Display

IV. ADVANTAGES

a) Less maintenance.
b) It has higher efficiency.
c) Less fault occurs in underground cable This method is applicable to all types of cable ranging from 1kv to 500kv.
d) It can detect other types of cable fault such as short circuit fault, cable cuts
e) Resistive fault, Sheath faults, Water trees, Partial discharges.

V. FUTURE SCOPE

1. Integration of IoT and Connectivity: Future developments can focus on integrating the fault detector system with the Internet of Things (IoT) and connectivity technologies. It can enable centralized monitoring of multiple underground cable networks, facilitating proactive maintenance and fault management.
2. Advanced Data Analytics: Further advancements can be made in data analytics techniques applied to fault detection and localization. Machine learning algorithms can be refined and expanded to improve the accuracy of fault identification, especially in complex fault scenarios. Incorporating predictive analytics can also help anticipate potential faults based on historical data and patterns.
3. Enhanced Fault Localization Techniques: Research can be conducted to explore and develop more precise and efficient fault localization techniques. This could involve the integration of advanced imaging technologies, such as ground-penetrating radar or infrared thermography, to provide detailed visualization and mapping of underground cable faults.

VI. CONCLUSION

This is proposed model of Cable fault distance locator using microcontroller. It is classified in four parts DC power supply part, cable part, controlling part, display part. DC power supply part consist of ac supply of 230v is stepdown using transformer, bridge - rectifier converts ac signal to dc & regulator is used to produce constant dc voltage. The cable part is denoted by set of resistors along with switches. Current sensing part of cable represented as set of resistors &switches are used as fault creators to indicate the fault at each location. The microcontroller also forms part of the controlling unit and makes necessary calculations regarding the distance of the fault. The microcontroller also drives a relay driver which in turn controls the switching of a set of relays for proper connection of the cable at each phase. The display part consists of the LCD display interfaced to the microcontroller which shows the status of the cable of each phase and the distance of the cable at the particular phase, in case of any fault

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