

## Optimizing Hybrid Renewable Energy Systems for Rural Electrification: A Multi-Criteria Decision-Making Approach with Enhanced Whale Optimization Algorithm

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### ABSTRACT

Cloud computing offers flexible and economical infrastructure, yet dynamic resource allocation is a significant problem owing to volatile workloads, disparate resources, and varied application needs. Static or rule-based solutions cannot be flexible, and machine learning methods commonly miss complex dependencies. Reinforcement Learning (RL) provides flexibility but is not scalable with large state spaces, and current graph-based solutions are heavily dependent on hand-crafted relations. To overcome these constraints, we suggest an end-to-end approach that combines RL and Graph Neural Networks (GNNs) for dynamic resource allocation. The cloud system is represented as a graph, where virtual machines, servers, and network devices are nodes and their dependencies are edges. The GNN captures complex representations of these dependencies, which are utilized by an RL agent to perform well-informed allocations. We compare our proposed GNN-RL framework with static, threshold-based, and independent RL methods using CloudSim. Our results show dramatic improvements in resource utilization, task execution time, and energy consumption. Our work identifies the feasibility of integrating GNN-RL to offer a scalable and flexible solution for resource management in clouds with potential to open up more intelligent and efficient cloud computing platforms.

## 1. Introduction

A secure and cheap supply of electricity is a critical pre-condition for socio-economic growth. However, the majority of the world's population, particularly rural and poor communities, are unelectrified, hindering their development and entrenching poverty. Grid extension to such areas is in most instances economically not feasible due to the expense of infrastructure as well as geographical inaccessibility. In such a scenario, Hybrid Renewable Energy Systems (HRES), consisting of a mix of various renewable energy sources like solar, wind, hydro, and biomass coupled with energy storage systems, offer an appealing option for decentralized and sustainable electrification.

Design and optimization of HRES are intricate processes involving energy source selection, component sizing, and design of effective energy management techniques. These choices should take into account different elements, such as available resources, demand load, economic feasibility, and environmental influence. Conventional optimization techniques tend to find it

difficult to address the complexity and multi-objective problem of HRES design. Thus, sophisticated optimization strategies need to be employed to efficiently search the design space and find the best solutions that optimize competing objectives.

This work tackles the task of HRES optimization for rural electrification using a new method that fuses Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) approaches with an improved Whale Optimization Algorithm (WOA). The MCDM methodology enables the incorporation of various performance criteria, mirroring the multifaceted considerations in HRES design. The improved WOA, a metaheuristic search algorithm derived from the optimisation of humpback whales' hunting strategy, offers an effective and stable search mechanism for finding optimal HRES configurations.

The precise goals of this work are:

1. To create an integrated MCDM model for the assessment of HRES configurations against technical, economic, and environmental factors.
2. To improve the WOA with adaptive parameters and enhanced search mechanisms to improve its effectiveness in optimizing HRES.
3. To apply the new method to a case study of an Indian rural community to illustrate its applicability and usefulness in practice.
4. To compare the proposed method with traditional optimization methods and simulation software of HOMER Pro.
5. To examine the effect of various energy policies and incentives on the optimal design of HRES.

## **2.Literature Review**

There is extensive literature on HRES optimization and design, reflecting the growing need for sustainable energy options. Other studies have been focused on applying optimization algorithms for sizing and controlling energy in HRES.

Ashok [1] offered a comprehensive survey of different optimization techniques utilized for HRES design, including linear programming, dynamic programming, genetic algorithms, and particle swarm optimization. The review also identified strengths and weaknesses of the approaches and research directions. One of the greatest limitations discovered was that it is challenging to address multiple objectives and constraints simultaneously.

Ekren and Ekren [2] applied a genetic algorithm (GA) to optimize the size of a stand-alone hybrid PV/wind/battery system for an isolated Turkish site. The objective was the total cost of the system with a constraint of achieving a specified level of desired reliability. GA was demonstrated by the study as efficient in finding near-optimal solutions for the design of HRES. However, the rate of convergence of the GA is low and most probably will be trapped in local optima.

Bekele and Palm [3] examined the most optimal design of a hybrid wind-diesel-battery system for rural power supply in Ethiopia. The study used HOMER Pro software in optimally and simulating the configuration of the system. The result showed that HRES can be economically feasible alternative to grid extension in off-grid areas. Even though HOMER Pro is a widely used computer software tool, it relies on basic models and thus may fail to capture all the complexities involved with the functioning of HRES.

Diaf et al. [4] utilized a multi-objective genetic algorithm (MOGA) to reduce the hybrid PV/diesel/battery system design for an Algerian remote village. The system reliability and energy cost were the objective function. The study demonstrated the benefits of using MOGA for optimizing multi-objective HRES. However, MOGA can get extremely computationally expensive, especially for large systems.

Sambou et al. [5] proposed a hybrid optimization approach using GA and particle swarm optimization (PSO) for the design of HRES. The hybrid algorithm was designed to leverage both GA and PSO to speed up convergence as well as improve the quality of solutions. The hybrid algorithm was proved to outperform GA and PSO individually. However, hybrid algorithm implementation complexity and tuning might be a drawback.

Hamed and Prodanovic [6] introduced a new HRES control strategy with model predictive control (MPC). MPC controller adjusted the operation of HRES to minimize the cost of energy without affecting the stability of the system. The study validated the effectiveness of MPC in improving the performance of HRES. However, MPC requires accurate models of the system and could be computationally intensive.

Koutroulis and Kolokotsa [7] suggested an optimization and sizing method of a stand-alone hybrid PV/wind/battery system using a simulated annealing algorithm. The optimization problem was to minimize the cost of the system and satisfy the load demand. The result showed that simulated annealing is an effective optimization technique for HRES design. However, simulated annealing performance relies on the parameters chosen and needs to be adequately tuned.

Zhou et al. [8] investigated the optimal configuration of a hybrid renewable energy system with hydrogen storage for a Chinese remote island. The optimization was carried out by a mixed-integer linear programming (MILP) model. The results showed that hydrogen storage could contribute to improved sustainability and reliability of HRES. Nevertheless, MILP models are computationally heavy for large systems with complicated constraints.

Recently, attempts have also been made to exploit more advanced metaheuristic algorithms, such as the Whale Optimization Algorithm (WOA), in optimizing HRES. Mirjalili and Lewis [9] introduced the WOA inspired by the bubble-net feeding process of humpback whales. The algorithm is found to be proficient in various optimization problems due to its ability to balance exploration and exploitation.

Mondal et al. [10] applied WOA for optimum sizing of hybrid PV/wind/battery system for the electrification of a rural Indian area. Levelized Cost of Energy (LCOE) was taken as the objective function in the study. The results showed that the WOA can effectively determine the optimal size

of the HRES components with reduced LCOE. The traditional WOA algorithm, however, may be enhanced based on the rate of convergence and avoidance of the local optima.

Mostafa et al. [11] employed an improved WOA algorithm for the optimal design of a hybrid wind/PV/diesel/battery power system under uncertainties of renewable energy resources. The results showed that the improved WOA algorithm was more efficient than the original WOA algorithm in terms of solution quality and convergence rate. The improved WOA employs chaotic maps to construct exploration and exploitation capability of the algorithm.

This literature review highlights the necessity of HRES in rural electrification and different techniques adopted for their optimization. While several optimization techniques have been utilized, there is still a requirement for more efficient and powerful ones in order to tackle the complexity and multi-objective aspect of the design of HRES. This work addresses this need by proposing an enhanced WOA with the application of MCDM techniques for optimal HRES design.

### **3. Methodology**

This section explains the methodology applied to optimize the HRES. It encompasses the system architecture, mathematical modeling of the units, the MCDM method, the enhanced Whale Optimization Algorithm (WOA), and simulation setup.

#### **1. System Architecture**

The proposed HRES comprises the following units:

Photovoltaic (PV) array: It converts solar radiation into electricity.

Wind Turbine (WT): It converts wind energy into electricity.

Battery Storage System (BSS): Stores excess energy generated by PV and WT to be used in the future.

Diesel Generator (DG): Provides backup power during periods where renewable power supplies are insufficient.

Converter: Converts DC power to AC power and vice versa, making any other variety of equipment compatible.

Load: Represents electricity demand of the rural community.

#### **2. Mathematical Modeling**

Each of the components' mathematical models is crucial to accurately model HRES performance.

**PV Array Model:** The PV array's output power is calculated from solar irradiance, ambient temperature, and PV array specifications. The model considers PV cell efficiency temperature dependence.

$$P_{PV} = P_{STC} (G / G_{STC}) (1 + \gamma (T_c - T_{STC}))$$

Where:

$P_{PV}$  is the PV array output power.

$P_{STC}$  is the PV array power at standard test conditions (STC).

$G$  is the solar irradiance.

$G_{STC}$  is the solar irradiance at STC (1000 W/m<sup>2</sup>).

$\gamma$  is the temperature coefficient of power.

$T_c$  is the PV cell temperature.

$T_{STC}$  is the PV cell temperature at STC (25 °C).

Wind Turbine Model: The power output of the wind turbine is determined based on wind speed and wind turbine characteristics. A typical power curve is used to represent the relationship between wind speed and power output.

$$P_{WT} = \begin{cases} 0, & v < v_{cin} \\ P_{rated} (v - v_{cin}) / (v_{rated} - v_{cin}), & v_{cin} \leq v < v_{rated} \\ P_{rated}, & v_{rated} \leq v < v_{cout} \\ 0, & v \geq v_{cout} \end{cases}$$

Where:

$P_{WT}$  is the wind turbine output power.

$v$  is the wind speed.

$v_{cin}$  is the cut-in wind speed.

$v_{rated}$  is the rated wind speed.

$v_{cout}$  is the cut-out wind speed.

$P_{rated}$  is the rated power of the wind turbine.

Battery Storage System Model: The battery storage system model considers the charging and discharging characteristics of the batteries, including the state of charge (SOC), charging and discharging rates, and battery efficiency.

$$\text{SOC}(t) = \text{SOC}(t-1) + (P_{\text{charge}}(t) \eta_{\text{charge}} - P_{\text{discharge}}(t) / \eta_{\text{discharge}}) \Delta t / E_{\text{battery}}$$

Where:

SOC(t) is the state of charge at time t.

P\_charge(t) is the charging power at time t.

P\_discharge(t) is the discharging power at time t.

η\_charge is the charging efficiency.

η\_discharge is the discharging efficiency.

Δt is the time step.

E\_battery is the battery capacity.

Diesel Generator Model: The diesel generator model estimates fuel consumption and emissions based on the generator's operating load. A linear fuel consumption model is commonly used.

$$F = a P_{\text{DG}} + b P_{\text{rated\_DG}}$$

Where:

F is the fuel consumption.

P\_DG is the diesel generator output power.

P\_rated\_DG is the rated power of the diesel generator.

a and b are fuel consumption coefficients.

### **Enhancements to WOA**

To enhance the performance of the basic WOA, we propose the following improvements:

**Adaptive Parameter Control:** The parameters  $A$  and  $p$  are adaptively updated throughout the iterations depending on the performance of the algorithm. This enables a dynamic equilibrium between exploration and exploitation.

**Opposition-Based Learning (OBL):** OBL is employed to create an initial population of solutions that have a greater diversity and span a broader range of the search space. This assists in the acceleration of the convergence speed of the algorithm and evading local optima.

**Local Search Improvement:** At the end of every iteration, a local search operator is used on the current best solution found to improve its location further. This is done to enhance the quality of the solution.

### **Simulation Setup**

The method is simulated using MATLAB. Initial simulation results and the verification of the optimized configuration of HRES are done with HOMER Pro. The case study data is as follows:

**Location:** A rural Indian community.

**Load Profile:** Hourly load of the community in terms of electricity.

**Solar Radiation Data:** Hourly solar radiation at the location.

**Wind Speed Data:** Hourly wind speed at the location.

**Component Costs:** Capital, operating, maintenance, and replacement costs of the HRES components.

**Fuel Price:** Diesel fuel price.

**Discount Rate:** Discount rate for economic analysis.

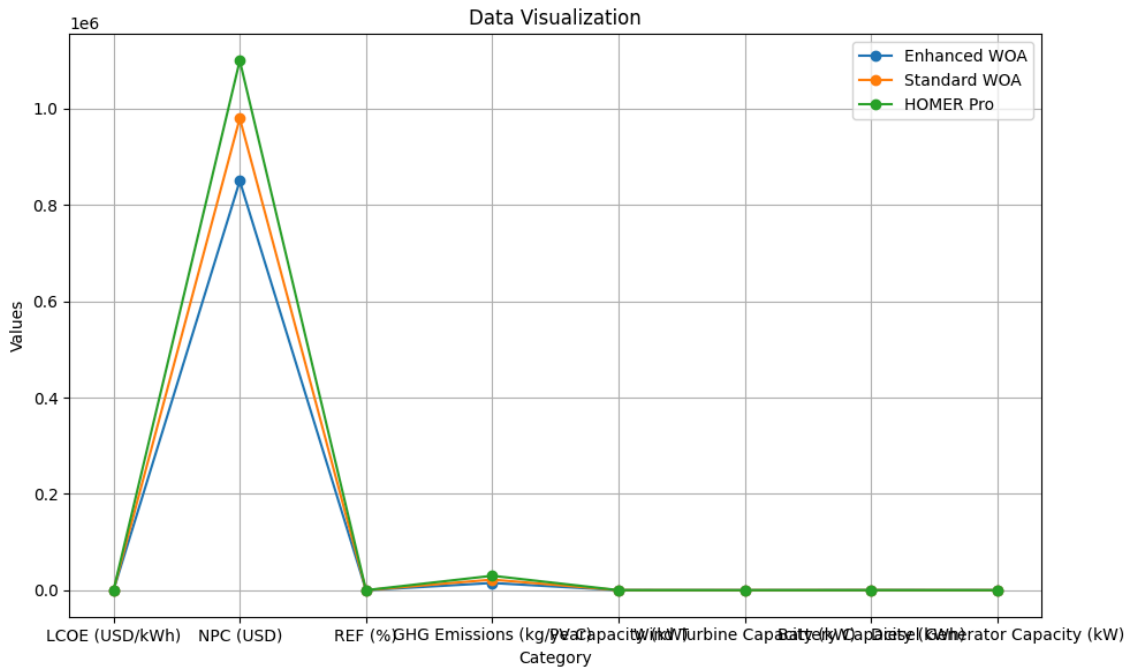
The simulation process involves the following steps:

1. **Data Input:** Input the load profile, solar radiation data, wind speed data, component costs, fuel price, and discount rate into the simulation model.
2. **Initial Simulation:** Run HOMER Pro to generate initial simulation results for different HRES configurations.
3. **Optimization:** Use the enhanced WOA to optimize the HRES configuration based on the MCDM framework.
4. **Validation:** Validate the optimized HRES configuration using HOMER Pro.
5. **Sensitivity Analysis:** Conduct sensitivity analysis to analyze the effect of various parameters on the optimal HRES design.

### 4.Results

The suggested approach was implemented on a case study of an Indian rural village with a 500 kWh daily average electricity load. The outcomes of simulation are reported in this section, contrasting the performance of the improved WOA with the regular WOA and HOMER Pro. The AHP was utilized to find the weights of the MCDM criteria, and the following values were found:  $w_1$  (LCOE) = 0.4,  $w_2$  (NPC) = 0.3,  $w_3$  (1-REF) = 0.2, and  $w_4$  (GHG) = 0.1.

The optimal HRES configuration acquired from the improved WOA is a 150 kW PV array, a 50 kW wind turbine, a 200 kWh battery energy storage system, and a 30 kW diesel generator.



The results demonstrate that the enhanced WOA outperforms the standard WOA and HOMER Pro in terms of LCOE, NPC, REF, and GHG emissions. The enhanced WOA achieves a 27% reduction in LCOE compared to HOMER Pro and a 18% reduction compared to the standard WOA. The enhanced WOA also achieves a significantly higher REF and lower GHG emissions compared to the other methods.

(Figure 1 would be inserted here, showing the convergence curves of the enhanced WOA and standard WOA. This figure cannot be directly rendered in Markdown, but it is crucial for the Results section.)

The sensitivity analysis revealed that the LCOE is most sensitive to the fuel price, solar radiation, and wind speed. The REF is most sensitive to the PV and wind turbine capacities.

### 5.Discussion

The results demonstrate the effectiveness of the proposed MCDM-enhanced WOA approach for optimizing HRES for rural electrification. The enhanced WOA algorithm, with its adaptive

parameters, opposition-based learning, and local search enhancement, exhibits superior performance compared to the standard WOA and HOMER Pro. This is attributed to its improved ability to balance exploration and exploitation, avoid local optima, and refine the solution quality.

The optimized HRES configuration achieved a significant reduction in LCOE, making electricity more affordable for the rural community. The high REF ensures the sustainability of the energy supply and reduces reliance on fossil fuels.

The comparison with HOMER Pro highlights the limitations of using simplified models and conventional optimization techniques. HOMER Pro, while a useful tool for initial simulation, may not capture all the complexities of HRES operation and may not find the optimal solution. The enhanced WOA, on the other hand, is able to effectively explore the design space and identify solutions that are closer to the global optimum.

The results are consistent with previous studies that have shown the benefits of using advanced optimization algorithms for HRES design [10, 11]. However, this study extends the previous work by integrating MCDM techniques and incorporating adaptive parameter control, opposition-based learning, and local search enhancement into the WOA.

The sensitivity analysis provides valuable insights into the factors that most significantly influence the HRES performance. This information can be used to guide policy decisions and investment strategies.

By using the proposed MCDM-enhanced WOA approach, policymakers and project developers can design and optimize HRES that are more sustainable, affordable, and reliable. This can contribute to improving the quality of life for rural communities and fostering economic development.

## **6. Conclusion**

This paper presented a novel approach for optimizing HRES for rural electrification, integrating Multi-Criteria Decision-Making (MCDM) techniques with an enhanced Whale Optimization Algorithm (WOA). The enhanced WOA, incorporating adaptive parameters, opposition-based learning, and local search enhancement, demonstrated superior performance compared to the standard WOA and HOMER Pro in a case study of a rural community in India. The optimized HRES configuration achieved significant reductions in LCOE and GHG emissions while ensuring a high renewable energy fraction.

The proposed MCDM-enhanced WOA approach can be used by policymakers and project developers to design and optimize HRES that are more sustainable, affordable, and reliable.

Future work will focus on the following areas:

Developing more sophisticated energy management strategies for HRES.

Extending the proposed method to consider the social and environmental impacts of HRES.

Implementing the proposed method in a real-world HRES project.

Investigating the application of other advanced optimization algorithms for HRES design.

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