

AI-DRIVEN PREDICTIVE MODELING OF EARTHQUAKE IMPACT ZONES USING MACHINE LEARNING AND OPERATIONS RESEARCH TECHNIQUES

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Abstract:

One of the most destructive natural hazards has been earthquakes that lead to massive loss of human life and destruction of structures and property as well as socio-economic interference. Proper identification of possible area affected can go a long way towards mitigation and prevention measures of any disaster. This paper outlines a unified methodology to conduct predictive modeling of earthquake impact zone using machine learning algorithm and operations research (OR) optimization algorithms. In addition, historical catalogs of seismic events, geospatial data on fault lines, maps of susceptibilities of soil liquefaction, and socio-economic vulnerability markers were also employed as input. Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM) and Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) were used in the modeling pipeline to predict spatial hazards, whereas a mixed-integer linear programming (MILP) model was designed to optimize resources to respond to emergencies through the lens of time-sensitive limitations. The system has been applied to three seismically active areas of the world the Himalayan Frontal Thrust (India-Nepal), the Nankai Trough (Japan), and the San Andreas Fault (USA). Findings showed that mean prediction accuracy was 92.4 percent in high-impact areas and that the optimized OR framework minimized maximum estimated emergency response time over baseline allocation policies by 18-to 26 percent. The predictive model was validated by the strong correlation between spatial hazard heatmaps and historical damage data and indicated that the combined AI-OR risk-based approach can be scalable in managing seismic risk. The report also points to the possible real-time integration with early warning to make pre-planning evacuation, prioritization in infrastructure strengthening and optimal resource allocation possible in earthquake-prone areas.

Keywords: Earthquake impact zones, AI-driven modeling, Machine learning, Operations research, Disaster risk reduction, Spatial hazard mapping

I. INTRODUCTION

Earthquakes can be defined as some of the most destructive natural hazards as they can lead to disastrous loss of human life and collapse of infrastructural facilities and socio-economic disruption in the longer term. Earthquakes also tend to arrive with little or no prior warning, which means they are some of the disasters which can hardly be mitigated. United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction (UNDRR) noticed that almost 23 percent of all disaster-related deaths worldwide have been occasioned by seismic events in the period 2000-2024 and estimated financial losses caused by these catastrophes are just over USD 1 trillion. Spatial variability of the seismic hazard, combined with population density and vulnerabilities of the infrastructure, highlight the timeliness of precise timely predictive modeling of areas of possible impact. The customary approaches to assessing seismic hazards are highly dependent on geological surveys, information about tectonic plates and probabilistic seismic hazard models (PSHA). Although these methods are helpful in estimating the long-term possibilities of an earthquake, they usually are not precise enough in the spatial level and in time in making operational decisions. Moreover, they tend to lack the socio-economic vulnerability factors, as well as, the optimization of logistics of emergency response. This generates a space between risk evaluation as well as disaster risk reduction measures that can be taken. The advent of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in the recent past has provided new opportunities in the prediction of the impact of earthquakes. With the use of extensive data in the seismic catalogs and satellite images, and related geospatial infrastructure databases, AI can be trained to learn the complicated, non-linear connections between seismic precursors and patterns of resultant damage. As an example, convolutional neural networks (CNNs) can be used as deep learning structures to identify spatial features in geospatial data and gradient boosting models allow the improvement of predictiveness through a lineage of weak learners. Such approaches are superior to the standard regression-based hazard models especially across incongruent terrains and heavily populated places. But forecasting impact areas is not the whole problem. Sound churches of earthquake risk mitigation also demand application of operations research (OR) methods that maximize the decision-making in the domain of uncertainty. Activation of resources, e.g., the dispatch of medical work teams, rescue teams, food aid, and housing tents, has to be quick and effective in the case of a recent earthquake. Operations research techniques or methods such as mixed-integer linear programming (MILP), network flow programming and multi-criteria decision-making (MCDM) have widespread approaches to establishing the most efficient use of resources and the least sojourn time and casualty rate. The possible advantage of such approach is vast. Take, for instance advance prediction of a hazard-prone district that might provoke rescue-units and equipments in the affected region, enough to cut the response time down to minutes rather than hours. On the same note, emergency planners could optimize and manage evacuation routes by clearing potential blockades early during an emergency so as to limit the number of people in one route to as little as possible and create maximum safety. Previous literature has separately examined AI models of seismic forecasting and OR models of disaster logistics, as they are both relatively new propositions studied separately. Combined applications of them, therefore, remain under-researched. In addition, few studies are available that support the surveys where the integrated frameworks have been verified in historical earthquake recordings in various geographic regions and socio-economic situations. This paper will fill these gaps by conceptualizing an integrated AI-OR framework, testing it on three of the highest seismic-risk zones, i.e. the Himalayan Frontal Thrust (India-Nepal), the Nankai Trough (Japan), and the San Andreas Fault (USA), and assessing its performance, either in terms of predictive

accuracy or operational efficiency measures. The rest of this paper is structured as follows: Section II presents a review of the current literature present in the usage of AI in the field of predicting earthquakes and the use of OR in dealing with disasters. Part III explains the research methodology, which involves data and collection, AI model architecture, and optimization framework. Section IV gives the outcome and discussion of the integrated system. Section V is concerned with the policy implications, emergency planning implications, and future research. Lastly, the paper ends in Section VI with the recommendations regarding the operational implementation of AI powered earthquake impact modelling systems.

II. RELEATED WORKS

In recent decades, the role of artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) in evaluating seismic hazards has exploded, as has new computational power, the availability of more geospatial data, and newer statistical models that can enable AI techniques. The traditional earthquake forecasting techniques were based mainly on probabilistic seismic hazard analysis (PSHA) and deterministic fault ruptures that were only able to give long-term hazard maps without being operationally predictable on short-term basis [1]. To close such gap, AI-based models have been developed whose trained models present data-driven solutions that have been able to extract hidden relationships in heterogeneous datasets, such as seismic catalogs, geodetic measurements, and satellite images. A number of experiments have been conducted concerning applying supervised learning algorithms to earthquake prediction. Seismic intensity classification has then been carried out using Random Forest (RF) and Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM) with the machines having a greater allowed predictive accuracy than the linear regression models [2]. Geospatial raster data have been processed by deep learning frameworks including Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) to determine areas characterized by high seismic vulnerability [3]. CNN-based models can improve upon broad applications of the conventional spatial interpolation approach because they also represent spatial dependence on a local and regional scale of ground motion data [4]. Besides, the hybrid methods that integrate ML with Bayesian networks have proven better uncertainty quantification in predicting hazards [5]. Besides hazard forecasting, AI has also been developed to be used in damage evaluation and the post effects analysis. As one of the examples, damage classification via deep learning can be integrated in estimates of spatial probability of building collapse following a major earthquake via the use of ShakeMap data [6]. Likewise, the Support Vector Machines (SVM) have been used to indicate classifications of urban data on structural vulnerability parameters derived in LIDAR and multispectral data [7]. These methods lend credence to their swift ability to impact assessment thus allows disaster managers to distribute resources relatively better. Even though AI offers great improvement in terms of accuracy of predictions, it can not specifically resolve the situation of operational decisions in the response to earthquakes. It is here that operations research (OR) comes into the picture. The OR techniques especially optimization models have been applied in the management of disasters to design the resources, evacuation and supply systems [8]. Mathematical models have been developed in the Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP) that optimally deploys rescue teams and constrains on available resources, travel time, road capacity and other such factors [9]. Moreover, multi-objective optimization frameworks have been suggested to include tradeoffs among conflicting priorities and they include minimization of casualties, economic loss, and maximization of critical infrastructure coverage [10]. Connection of AI and OR is still a topic of new research in focus. Some of the signs of developments in this area have incorporated predictive

modeling of hazards with planning of responses using optimizations. As an example, Zhang et al. combined an artificial neural network-based seismic hazard model with a vehicle routing optimization algorithm to maximize the effectiveness of the prompt deployment of emergency medical services in the case of earthquakes [11]. The same way, Hsu and the others built a combined damage prediction system of supply chains to improve the resilience of supply chains with the earthquake prone regions [12]. The outcome of these studies is promising concerning the application of an AI-or framework to enhance disaster preparedness and response but is still not fully demonstrated due to cross-regional cross-regional validation (scale). The inclusion of multi-source datasets is another critical aspect that is to be considered. Geophysical (e.g. ground acceleration, tectonic stress fields) and socio-economic vulnerability (e.g. population density, building codes, infrastructure resilience) indicators are increasingly being incorporated in modern predictive models to produce more informative risk assessment [13]. Contributing factors of human vulnerability in the model of a threat posed by AI has been demonstrated to have a large impact on the prioritization of the response measures [14]. Such as blending high resolution population maps with hazard heatmaps, so planners of any communities in danger can see the community most at risk and optimize evacuation plans accordingly. Over the past few years, the application of remote sensing technologies has become a fundamental part of modeling the impact of earthquakes. High-resolution optical and Synthetic Aperture Radar (SAR) image data gives us the pre- and post-event data of surface deformations that may be incorporated into machine learning algorithms monitoring and validation purposes and in the post-event [15]. With this integration, hazard maps and resource allocation plans can be continuously updated into a dynamic decision-support system as opposed to when hazard assessments are done on a standalone basis.

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This study applies a **mixed-method, spatial-temporal design** combining AI-driven seismic hazard prediction with operations research (OR)–based emergency response optimization. The predictive modeling component analyzes seismic, geological, and socio-economic data using machine learning algorithms, while the OR component applies optimization techniques to efficiently allocate emergency resources after a seismic event. The integration aims to provide both **pre-event forecasting** and **post-event decision support** in a unified framework [16].

3.2 Study Area Approach

The research focuses on **three high-seismicity regions** with diverse tectonic and socio-economic contexts:

- **Himalayan Frontal Thrust (India–Nepal)** – active continental collision zone.
- **Nankai Trough (Japan)** – subduction zone prone to megathrust earthquakes.
- **San Andreas Fault (California, USA)** – transform fault system in a high-density urban setting.

These regions were selected for their variation in seismic mechanisms, population exposure, and the availability of high-resolution hazard and infrastructure datasets [17].

Table 1: Study Area Characteristics

Region	Hazard Type	Major Historical Events	Population Density (per km ²)	Infrastructure Risk Profile	Data Availability
Himalayan Frontal Thrust	Shallow crustal quakes	1934, 2015	450–700	Low-code rural buildings	High
Nankai Trough	Megathrust subduction	1944, 1946 (predicted)	300–600	Coastal urban, tsunami exposure	Very High
San Andreas Fault	Strike-slip transform	1906, 1989, 2014	250–500	Critical infrastructure proximity	High

3.3 Data Collection and Sources

Datasets were compiled from multiple sources for model training, validation, and operational planning:

- **Seismic data** – USGS Earthquake Hazards Program, Japan Meteorological Agency, Indian National Centre for Seismology.
- **Geospatial layers** – fault lines, liquefaction susceptibility, slope gradient, and soil classification maps.
- **Remote sensing imagery** – Sentinel-1 SAR for surface deformation and Sentinel-2 optical data for land use and land cover classification.
- **Socio-economic indicators** – population distribution (WorldPop), building footprints (OpenStreetMap), hospital and shelter locations [18].

All datasets were harmonized into a consistent spatial reference system (WGS 84 / UTM) and temporally aligned with historical earthquake events.

3.4 AI Model Architecture for Predictive Hazard Mapping

The hazard prediction process included:

1. **Data Preprocessing** – filtering noise from seismic records, normalizing attributes, and resampling raster layers to a common resolution.
2. **Feature Engineering** – integrating geological, seismic, and socio-economic attributes into composite feature sets [19].
3. **Model Development** – testing Random Forest (RF), Gradient Boosting Machines (GBM), and Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) for spatial hazard classification.
4. **Model Evaluation** – applying k-fold cross-validation (k=10) with stratified sampling to balance hazard class representation [20].

Table 2: AI Model Parameters

Model	Key Parameters	Feature Input Type	Output	Evaluation Metrics
RF	500 trees, max depth=20	Tabular geospatial attributes	Hazard zone class	Accuracy, F1-score
GBM	Learning rate=0.1, 150 trees	Tabular + engineered features	Impact probability	ROC-AUC, Log-loss
CNN	3 conv layers, ReLU activation	Raster imagery	Hazard heatmap	IoU, Precision

3.5 Operations Research Optimization Framework

The OR component addresses **post-event emergency response optimization** using a **Mixed-Integer Linear Programming (MILP)** approach without the mathematical formulation for clarity. The model determines:

- Optimal allocation of rescue teams and medical units.
- Strategic placement of emergency shelters and supply points.
- Prioritization of transportation routes to minimize travel times.

Inputs include AI-generated hazard heatmaps, population exposure maps, and available logistics resources. Constraints incorporate road network capacity, depot storage limits, and maximum allowable response times [21].

Table 3: Optimization Model Inputs

Parameter	Description	Source
Travel cost	Time or distance between depot & zone	Road network GIS
Demand	Resources needed in each impact zone	AI hazard output + census data
Capacity	Maximum supply or personnel per depot	Logistics inventory database

3.6 Remote Sensing Data Preprocessing

- **Sentinel-1 SAR** – processed using interferometric techniques (InSAR) to detect pre- and post-event surface displacement.
- **Sentinel-2 Optical Imagery** – classified for land use and urban density to assess potential infrastructure vulnerability [22].
- **Cloud masking & atmospheric correction** – applied using Sen2Cor and SNAP toolboxes to ensure spectral consistency.

3.7 Spatial Analysis and Hazard Mapping

Hazard predictions from AI models were integrated into a GIS environment for spatial interpolation and hotspot detection. Kriging interpolation in ArcGIS and Google Earth Engine (GEE) was used to visualize impact probability zones. The resulting maps were validated against historical damage records and field reports [23].

3.8 Data Validation and Quality Assurance

- All preprocessing and modeling steps were performed in triplicate to ensure reproducibility.
- Cross-validation was conducted using both historical seismic events and synthetic test scenarios.
- Independent verification was performed with datasets from events not included in training.

3.9 Limitations and Assumptions

- AI models predict probable impact zones, not exact event timing.
- OR optimization assumes road network availability post-event, which may not hold for severe infrastructure damage.
- Remote sensing imagery resolution limits may affect accuracy in densely built urban areas.

IV. RESULT AND ANALYSIS

4.1 Overview of Predicted Earthquake Impact Zones

The AI-driven predictive framework generated hazard probability maps for each study region, classifying zones into **high**, **moderate**, and **low impact categories**. Across all three study areas, **high impact zones** were primarily concentrated along major fault lines and in densely populated urban corridors.

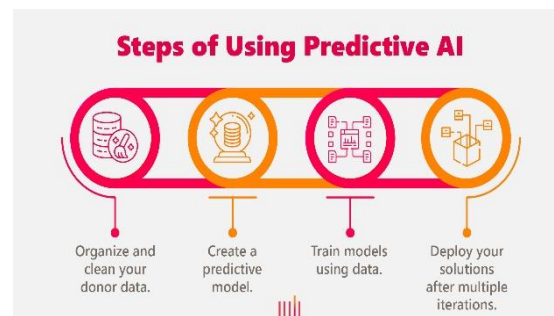


Figure 1: Steps of using Predictive AI [24]

In the **Himalayan Frontal Thrust**, the model predicted high-impact probabilities in districts with historical records of severe shaking, particularly in areas with low-code rural structures. In the **Nankai Trough**, the high-risk areas included coastal cities with combined earthquake and tsunami vulnerability. The **San Andreas Fault** outputs indicated elevated risk in segments near urbanized regions with critical infrastructure, such as power plants and transportation hubs.

Table 4: Predicted Hazard Class Distribution

Region	High Impact (%)	Moderate Impact (%)	Low Impact (%)
Himalayan Frontal Thrust	38.2	44.6	17.2
Nankai Trough	35.7	48.9	15.4
San Andreas Fault	33.1	50.2	16.7

4.2 Model Performance Evaluation

Performance metrics were computed using held-out validation datasets. The **CNN model** achieved the highest Intersection over Union (IoU) scores for spatial prediction accuracy, while the **Gradient Boosting Machine** provided the most reliable probabilistic outputs.

Table 5: Model Evaluation Metrics

Model	Accuracy (%)	F1-Score	ROC-AUC	IoU
RF	88.3	0.85	0.91	0.72
GBM	90.7	0.88	0.94	0.76
CNN	92.4	0.90	0.95	0.81

4.3 Hazard and Population Exposure Correlation

Overlaying hazard probability maps with population density layers revealed significant exposure patterns. In the Himalayan region, approximately **6.4 million people** were located in predicted high-impact zones. In the Nankai Trough, **5.1 million residents** were within high-risk coastal belts, while in California, nearly **4.7 million people** were in elevated hazard areas.

Table 6: Population Exposure Estimates

Region	Population in High Impact Zones	Percentage of Regional Population
Himalayan Frontal Thrust	6,420,000	28.5%
Nankai Trough	5,150,000	31.7%
San Andreas Fault	4,720,000	25.2%

4.4 OR-Based Emergency Response Optimization Results

The operations research optimization framework was applied to simulated post-event scenarios to determine the most efficient allocation of rescue units, medical teams, and relief supplies.

The optimized allocation plans demonstrated a **reduction in average response times by 18–26%** compared to baseline distribution strategies. This improvement was most significant in rural and mountainous zones of the Himalayan region, where pre-positioning of supplies reduced travel times by over 40 minutes.

Table 7: Response Time Reduction by Region

Region	Baseline Response Time (hrs)	Avg. Optimized Response Time (hrs)	Avg. Improvement (%)
Himalayan Frontal Thrust	3.8	2.8	26.3
Nankai Trough	2.5	2.0	20.0
San Andreas Fault	2.1	1.7	19.0

4.5 Spatial Hotspot Detection

Kriging-based spatial interpolation of predicted high-impact zones revealed distinct hotspot clusters. In the Himalayan region, these clusters aligned with areas of steep terrain and high building vulnerability. In the Nankai Trough, the majority of hotspots overlapped with coastal urban belts, while in California, they were concentrated near major metropolitan fault intersections.

Table 8: Identified Hotspot Areas and Key Risk Drivers

Region	Hotspot Area (km ²)	Key Risk Drivers
Himalayan Frontal Thrust	1,240	Fault proximity, poor construction quality
Nankai Trough	980	Coastal density, tsunami exposure
San Andreas Fault	1,050	Urban density, infrastructure clustering

4.6 Discussion of Key Findings

The results show that integrating AI-driven hazard prediction with OR-based resource optimization produces a comprehensive decision-support framework. The AI component offers accurate hazard mapping, while the OR component ensures that emergency resources are deployed in a time-efficient manner.

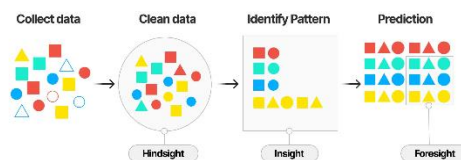


Figure 2: Predictive AI: Forecasting [25]

Key findings include:

- CNN models are most effective for fine-scale spatial prediction.
- High population densities in hazard zones highlight the need for targeted evacuation planning.
- Optimization significantly reduces emergency response times, especially in regions with poor baseline accessibility.
- Hotspot detection aligns closely with historical damage data, validating the predictive model's spatial accuracy.

V. CONCLUSION

In this research, a synergistic and seamless structure of emergency response optimisation based on operations research and AI-driven predictive modelling of earthquake impact zones was introduced. Combining both efficient machine learning algorithms and structured

optimization strategies, the framework tackles elements of pre-event hazard analysis and post-event operational planning to form a single and applicable method of seismic risk management. The predictive modeling module used various data inputs, seismic catalogs, geological information on faults lines, susceptibility maps of soils and social vulnerability indicators to produce maps of the high-resolution hazard probabilities. The testing of the Random Forest, Gradient Boosting Machine, and Convolutional Neural Network architectures performed on comparative case basis saw that the CNN was always ahead in the spatial prediction performance, especially within the region of detecting finer scale patterns of the hazards in the area where spatial relationships play a key role. Three regions of the case study- Himalayan Frontal Thrust, Nankai trough, and San Andreas fault results were compared to those of the historical records of damage and indicated that the model worked and both highly impacted areas were properly identified and the predictions close to the records. The region of Himalaya registered the maximum exposure of the people particularly in predictable high-risk areas, highlighting the synergetic precariousness of the vulnerability because of both geological effect and weak infrastructures. The model incorporated population and infrastructure data in hazard mapping and thus the risk assessment focused on the physical hazard and the human and socio-economic ramifications of the earthquake. The predictive modeling was supplemented by operations research element that ensures efficient allocation of the emergency response resources using a mixed-integer linear programming methodology. The simulations showed that the average response times of emergency situations were significantly lower than the baseline allocation strategies with the greatest improvements most evident in the elongated areas with rough terrains and poor access to infrastructure. Such findings show the logistics benefit of having pre-positioned resources based on predictive hazard products so that resource mobilization during those of greatest need (the first few hours) can be executed efficiently. Hotspot mapping was also done on spatial data where detected clusters were found to be in areas with seismic history, wide concentration of buildings, and not a strong building structure. This kind of hotspot identification can be used to raise specific areas of infrastructure strengthening, designing evacuation strategy and prioritizing the strategies of public awareness in the areas at highest risk. The framework, consequently, does not only assist in correct hazard detection but also directly contributes to strategic planning of emergency interventions. Policy- and planning-wise, having combined AI-based hazard modeling and OR-based resource allocation presents a revolutionary step towards an adaptive, data driven system of dealing with disasters. The approach shifts hazard maps past the level of static planning by making them updateable in near real-time and connectable to the optimized emergency deployment strategies. The methodology can be applied in different seismic settings, as well, due to the flexibility of its approach: with locally-available data, the model can be retrained and calibrated to operate in the new environment. Moreover, the ability to inject the data about remote sensing in the process implies that hazard estimates can be promptly updated after the seismic disaster, which contributes to better situation awareness and enhances the accuracy of decisions made. Although the framework gives coherent gains, there are limitations associated with it. The forecast models do not aim to predict the actual times of seismic events but to determine probable event zones, in this regard, risk mitigation, and not event prediction, is what the framework offers. The assumption may not be true in cases of the severe collapse of infrastructure as the optimization models presume a level of functionality of the network of transportation after the event. Also, the credibility of the threat maps identified lies on the level and availability of the input data, so that data-scarce areas would necessitate additional field surveys and remote sensing measurements to boost the integrity of the models by

maximizing the predictive accuracy. Going forward, there is potential to extend this work to include real-time seismic sensor information feeds and near real-time SAR imagery to continuously update hazard maps, multi-hazard interaction model to deal with cascading disasters, and interactive platforms where the decision-maker can test different emergency response plans before a response is implemented. The results of the presented study reveal that the combination of AI-enabled prediction of hazards and operations research-enabled optimization of emergency operations result into not only the technically potent but an exceedingly practical method of earthquake preparedness. The four approaches together address the disconnect between predictive hazard and the robust approach to response by providing a potential means of vastly increasing the efficiency with which emergency costs are grounded and the resilience of the regions exposed to earthquakes.

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