International Journal of Environmental Sciences
ISSN: 2229-7359
Vol. 11 No. 9s, 2025
https://www.theaspd.com/ijes.php

Paraleafnet: A Lightweight Parallel Cnn for Efficient Plant Disease Identification in Precision Agriculture

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ABSTRACT

Background: *Effective plant disease detection is vital for sustainable agriculture; however, the computational demands of many deep learning frameworks make them impractical for use in low-resource settings. This study proposes ParaLeafNet, a streamlined Parallel Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) that merges MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small with a Squeeze-and-Excitation (SE) Attention mechanism to improve feature extraction. Tailored for edge applications, ParaLeafNet underwent optimization via TensorFlow Lite and was tested on the PlantVillage dataset, with ablation studies examining the roles of its parallel design and attention system. ParaLeafNet outperformed standard CNN models in plant disease classification, providing both precision and computational efficiency. Visualization techniques confirmed its ability to pinpoint critical disease markers, boosting its utility for real-world scenarios. ParaLeafNet delivers a powerful deep learning solution for real-time plant disease monitoring, fostering sustainable farming practices by enabling farmers to tackle challenges early, curb losses, and advance precision agriculture. Its lightweight architecture ensures compatibility with resource-constrained devices, supporting broader food security goals. Future work will prioritize diverse real-world datasets and enhancements for ultra-low-power systems.*

Keywords: *Deep Learning, Parallel Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), MobileNetV2, MobileNetV3Small, Squeeze-and-Excitation (SE) Attention, Plant Disease Detection, Sustainable Agriculture, Food Security, Image Classification, Edge AI*

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture has long served as a fundamental pillar of human society, supporting food security, economic development, and ecological balance [1]. As a vital component of global economies, it plays a substantial role in shaping Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and generating employment opportunities [2]. Yet, the agricultural sector confronts significant hurdles, with the world's population expected to surpass 9 billion by 2050. Factors such as climate change, limited resources, and the increasing prevalence of plant diseases pose serious threats to agricultural output and food quality, raising urgent concerns for global food security [3]. Tackling these issues demands pioneering and adaptable strategies to foster sustainable agricultural practices.

Plant diseases represent a major driver of agricultural losses, diminishing yields by 20–30% each year and causing economic damages worth billions of dollars [4]. These losses disproportionately affect developing nations, where food security is often fragile, and they impede progress toward the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 2, which aims to eradicate hunger through sustainable farming by 2030 [5]. While healthy crops are crucial for productive agriculture, they remain susceptible to pathogens and environmental stresses, potentially triggering widespread economic and social consequences [6]. Conventional methods for detecting plant diseases depend on manual inspections by agricultural experts, a process that is slow, labor-intensive, and error-prone, especially in large-scale farming operations [7], [8]. These shortcomings have spurred the adoption of automated deep learning models, which offer quicker and more precise disease diagnosis [9], [10].

Deep learning methods, particularly Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), have proven highly effective for image-based plant disease classification. A range of CNN architectures, such as AlexNet [11], VGG [12], GoogLeNet (Inception) [13], ResNet [14], MobileNetV2 [15], ShuffleNet [16], EfficientNetB0 [17], EfficientNetV2 [18], and MobileNetV3 [19], have been widely investigated for plant disease identification. Research utilizing InceptionV3 and ResNet50 has shown notable gains in classification accuracy through transfer learning [20], [21]. More recent developments, like EfficientNetV2, have been employed for multilabel disease classification and pest identification, achieving cutting-edge results via progressive learning techniques [22]. Additionally, edge AI-based mobile applications using ResNet34 have delivered impressive accuracy (98.53%) for realtime plant disease detection [23]. A hybrid Variational Autoencoder (VAE) and CNN approach has also shown promising results in identifying diseases such as Bacterial Spot [24].

Despite these advancements, significant obstacles remain for practical agricultural applications. Many deep learning models are computationally intensive, restricting their deployment in environments with limited resources, such as mobile devices and edge computing platforms. To address these limitations, compact CNN architectures have been developed, offering efficient solutions for real-time plant disease identification. For instance, the CDDLite-YOLO model, as noted in [25], achieved a mean average precision of 90.6% and processed 222.22 frames per second, making it well-suited for embedded GPU applications. Similarly, a quantized CNN model [26] reduced computational requirements while maintaining high accuracy, facilitating use on resource-limited devices. However, existing lightweight models often face difficulties in capturing the detailed spatial and textural characteristics of plant diseases, leading to suboptimal classification performance.

To overcome these challenges, this study proposes ParaLeafNet, a Parallel Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) model that integrates MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small with Squeeze-and-Excitation (SE) Attention [27]. Unlike conventional singleCNN models, ParaLeafNet's dual-branch design improves feature diversity by merging complementary representations derived from two lightweight CNN backbones. MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small were selected for their optimized depthwise separable convolutional operations, which substantially decrease computational complexity while retaining effective feature extraction. The SE Attention mechanism "dynamically recalibrates channel-wise feature maps" [27], improving feature prioritization to emphasize critical disease-related patterns during classification.

ParaLeafNet underwent rigorous training and validation on the PlantVillage dataset, a widely recognized benchmark for plant disease classification. The architecture was further optimized for real-time inference using TensorFlow Lite (TFLite) [28], enabling deployment on mobile and edge devices while preserving high classification accuracy. An ablation study [29] was performed to assess the contributions of parallel feature fusion and SE Attention, revealing significant improvements over traditional single-CNN models. Moreover, comparisons with state-of-the-art models underscore the efficiency-accuracy trade-off [30] achieved by this approach.

The primary contributions of this research include: (1) designing a lightweight Parallel CNN model incorporating MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small for accurate plant disease detection, (2) integrating SE Attention to improve feature extraction and classification performance, (3) conducting thorough evaluations on the PlantVillage dataset, showing enhanced performance compared to existing single-CNN architectures, and (4) ensuring deployment feasibility through TFLite optimization, supporting real-time inference on mobile and edge devices.

By tackling the shortcomings of both conventional and advanced models, this study advances precision agriculture and sustainable farming practices. The paper is organized as follows: Section II outlines the methodology, Section III presents the experimental results, Section IV discusses the key findings, and Section V concludes with directions for future research.

II. METHODOLOGY

This study focuses on addressing the challenge of plant disease identification using a deep learning-based approach. To this end, a novel lightweight Parallel Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) architecture was developed and extensively evaluated using the PlantVillage dataset. The primary objective of this research is to enhance classification accuracy while maintaining computational efficiency, making it feasible for real-time deployment in resource-constrained environments. The overall methodology adopted in this study is illustrated in Fig. 1, which outlines the sequential stages from dataset preprocessing to model training, evaluation, and prediction.

A. Dataset

The PlantVillage dataset [31] comprises 54,306 images organized into 38 categories, representing 14 plant species and their associated diseases. Widely recognized as a benchmark for plant disease classification, it includes images taken in controlled settings with consistent lighting and backgrounds. Due to differences in image size and resolution, preprocessing was performed to ensure uniformity for model input. The class-wise distribution of images across different plant species and disease categories is presented in TABLE I.

TABLE I: Image distribution in the PlantVillage dataset

Plant Species	Classes	Images
Apple	4	4928
Blueberry	2	1502
Cherry	2	2256
Corn	2	2386
Grape	4	5043
Orange	2	2214
Peach	2	2767
Pepper	2	2471
Potato	3	3926
Raspberry	2	1258
Soybean	2	5499
Squash	2	2462
Strawberry	2	1818
Tomato	10	14776
Total	38	54306

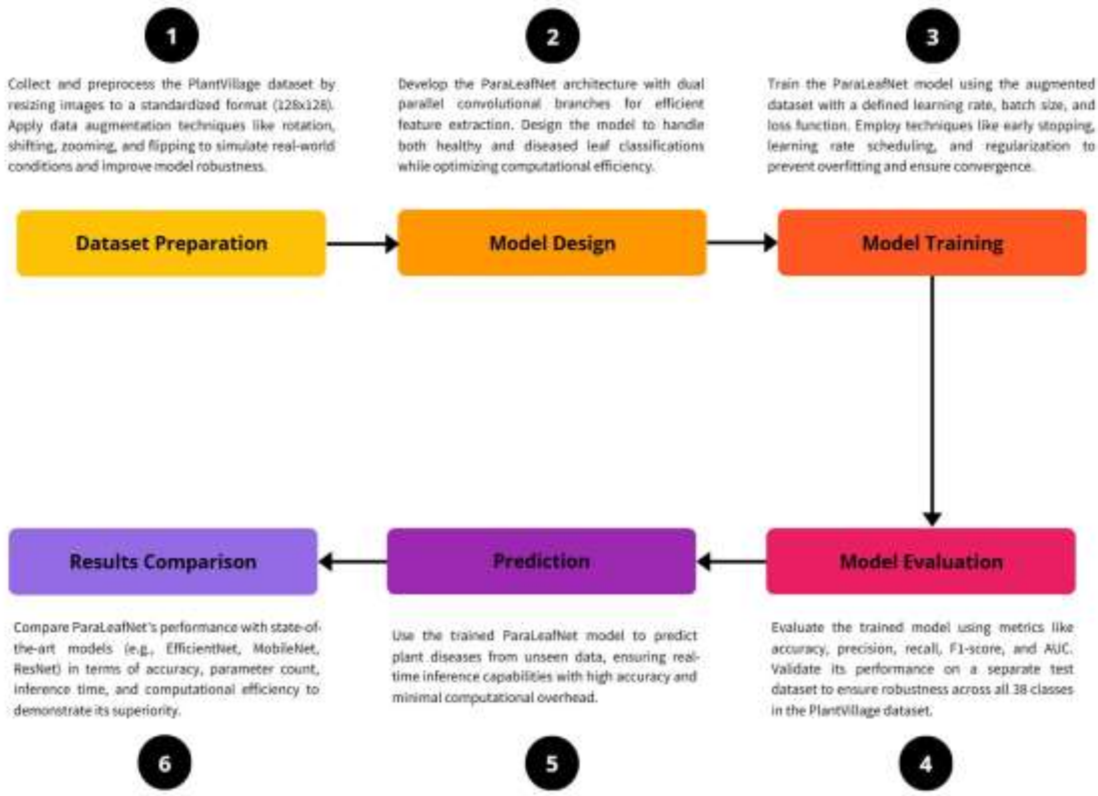

Fig. 1: Workflow of the proposed Parallel CNN model, detailing the sequential steps of data preparation, training, evaluation, prediction, and results comparison.

B. Data Preprocessing

The raw image data from the PlantVillage dataset undergoes several preprocessing steps before being used to train the proposed Parallel CNN model. These steps ensure data quality, consistency, and suitability for deep learning. The preprocessing workflow is illustrated in Fig. 2.

Initially, images are scaled to a standard size of 128 × 128 pixels to ensure uniformity, which is essential for CNN model inputs. The resizing process employs bilinear interpolation to preserve image quality and prevent distortion.

Next, pixel values are normalized to the range of 0 to 1. Normalization is an essential step in deep learning as it standardizes the input feature distribution, preventing features with higher pixel intensities from disproportionately influencing the model. Additionally, normalization improves the numerical stability of the training process, leading to faster convergence.

C. Data Augmentation

To improve the model's capacity to generalize, data augmentation is employed to enlarge the dataset artificially [32]. By applying transformations, augmentation minimizes overfitting and enhances model robustness. The applied techniques include:

- Rotation: Images are rotated randomly by an angle θ within a range ($[-\theta_{max}, \theta_{max}]$) to mimic various perspectives.
- Width/Height Shift: Images are shifted horizontally or vertically by a portion of their width or height to handle positional differences.
- Zoom: Images are scaled by a factor α to enable recognition at different magnification levels.

- Horizontal Flip: Images are mirrored horizontally with a probability *p* to improve detection across diverse orientations.

Examples of data augmentation techniques applied to the PlantVillage dataset are shown in Fig. 3.

D. Proposed Parallel CNN Architecture

The proposed ParaLeafNet model utilizes a *Parallel Convolutional Neural Network (CNN)* architecture that combines *MobileNetV2* and *MobileNetV3Small* with a *Squeeze-and-Excitation (SE) Attention* mechanism to improve feature extraction for plant disease classification [27]. Its dual-branch design enables the integration of custom convolutional features and pre-trained representations, enhancing classification accuracy. The complete architecture is illustrated in Fig. 4.

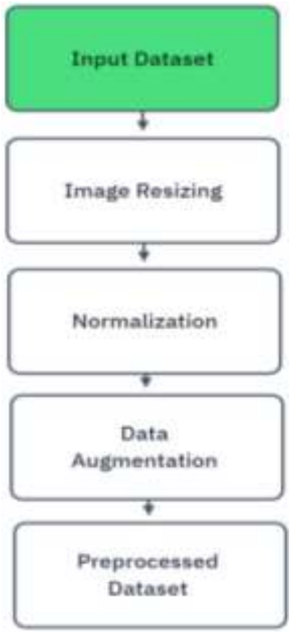

Fig. 2: Data preprocessing steps for the PlantVillage dataset.

Fig. 3: Examples of data augmentation techniques applied to the PlantVillage dataset.

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Each convolutional layer within the model follows the standard convolution operation, defined as:

$MN\ y_{i,j,k} = b_k + XX\ w_{m,n,k} \cdot x_{i+m-1,j+n-1}$ (1)

$m=1\ n=1$

where:

- $y_{i,j,k}$ is the output feature at position (i,j) in channel k.
- $x_{i+m-1,j+n-1}$ represents the input feature at position $(i + m - 1, j + n - 1)$.
- $w_{m,n,k}$ is the kernel weight at position (m,n) in channel k.
- b_k is the bias term for channel k.
- M and N denote the kernel height and width, respectively.

To enhance model stability and convergence, *Batch Normalization* [33] is applied after each convolutional layer:

$\hat{x}_i = \frac{x_i - \mu_B}{\sqrt{\sigma_B^2 + \epsilon}}$(2)

where:

- x_i represents an activation in mini-batch B.
- μ_B and σ_B^2 are the batch mean and variance.
- ϵ is a small constant for numerical stability.

Max pooling is then utilized to downsample feature maps:

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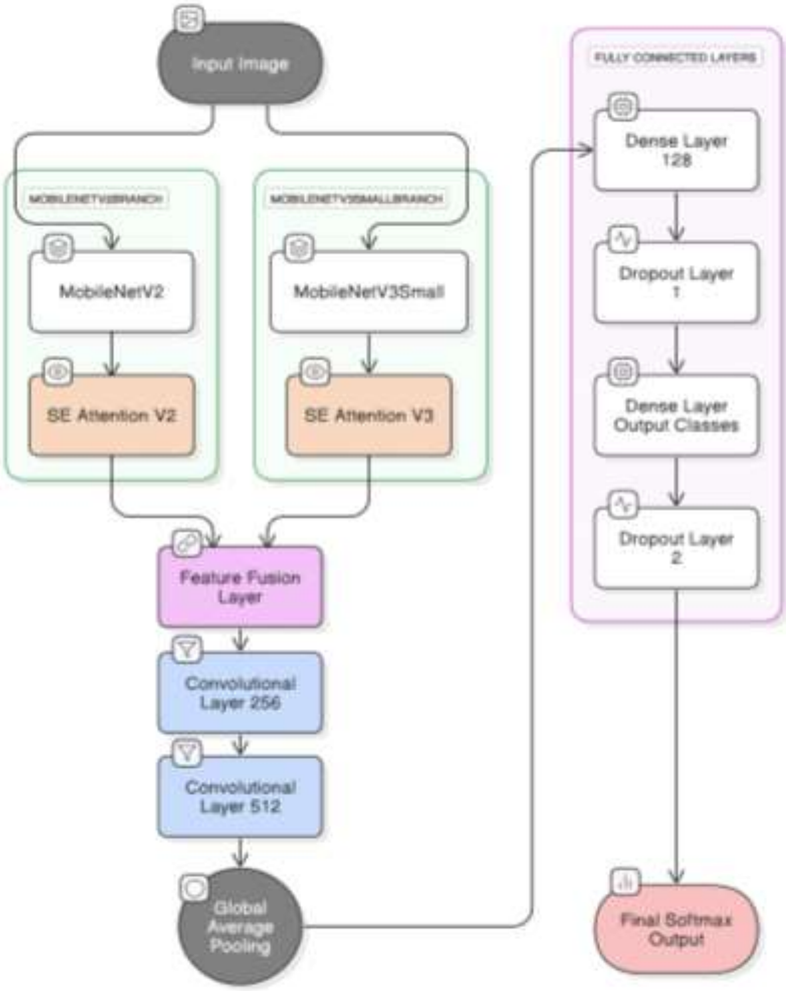

Fig. 4: *Architecture of the proposed parallel CNN model.*

$$y_{i,j} = \max_{m,n \in R(i,j)} x_{m,n} \qquad (3)$$

where:

- $y_{i,j}$ is the pooled output at position (i,j).
- $x_{m,n}$ is the input feature at position (m,n).
- $R(i,j)$ represents the pooling window centered at (i,j).

E. Parallel Feature Extraction

The proposed model consists of two parallel feature extraction branches:

• **Branch 1:** MobileNetV2 Feature Extractor

– Uses *MobileNetV2* as a backbone for lightweight feature extraction.

– *SE Attention V2* module is applied to adaptively recalibrate feature maps.

– Extracted deep features undergo *global average pooling* before merging.

• **Branch 2:** MobileNetV3Small Feature Extractor

– Utilizes *MobileNetV3Small*, optimized for low-power inference.

– Incorporates *SE Attention V3*, improving channel-wise feature refinement.

– Extracted features are passed through *global average pooling* before fusion.

The *Feature Fusion Layer* concatenates outputs from both branches, allowing the model to capture complementary features for robust classification.

F. Feature Aggregation and Classification
After fusion, the features undergo further transformation:

- Two additional *Convolutional Layers* (256 and 512 filters) refine the concatenated features.
- *Global Average Pooling (GAP)* reduces spatial dimensions and prevents overfitting:

$$y_k = \frac{1}{H \times W} \sum_{i=1}^{H} \sum_{j=1}^{W} x_{i,j,k} \quad (4)$$

where:

– y_k is the output for channel *k*.

– $x_{i,j,k}$ represents the feature map value at position (*i,j*) in channel *k*. – *H* and *W* are the height and width of the feature map.

- The final feature representation is processed through two *fully connected layers* (128 neurons and 38 neurons):

$$y = W \cdot x + b \quad (5)$$

where:

– y is the output vector.

– W is the weight matrix.

– x is the input feature vector. – b is the bias term.

To prevent overfitting, *dropout regularization* is applied after each fully connected layer. The final classification output is obtained using the *softmax activation function* [34]:

$$P(class_i|x) = \frac{e^{z_i}}{\sum_{j=1}^{38} e^{z_j}} \quad (6)$$

where:

- $P(class_i|x)$ denotes the probability of input x belonging to class i.
- z_i is the activation output for class i before softmax normalization.

G. Key Advantages of the Proposed Architecture

- ***Parallel Feature Learning*:** Extracts multi-scale features from two different MobileNet architectures.
- ***SE Attention Mechanism*:** Dynamically adjusts feature importance, improving feature selection.
- ***Lightweight Design*:** Efficient depthwise separable convolutions reduce computational cost.
- ***High Accuracy*:** Achieves 99.56% classification accuracy with robust generalization.
- ***Fast Inference*:** Optimized for real-time plant disease detection on mobile and edge devices.

H. Final Thoughts
This parallel CNN framework significantly enhances plant disease classification while maintaining a lightweight structure suitable for real-world deployment. The use of *MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small* with *SE Attention* optimally balances accuracy, efficiency, and interpretability.

I. Training Process

The proposed parallel CNN model was trained using the Adam optimizer [35], which adapts learning rates dynamically to optimize convergence. The sparse categorical cross-entropy loss function was used due to its effectiveness in multi-class classification tasks.

To ensure efficient training and prevent overfitting, several callback mechanisms were incorporated:

- ***Early Stopping:*** Training was halted if validation loss did not improve for consecutive epochs.
- ***Learning Rate Scheduling:*** The learning rate, initially set to 10^{-4}, was reduced upon performance plateau.
- ***Model Checkpointing:*** The best-performing model weights were saved based on validation accuracy.

Training was conducted on the PlantVillage dataset with a batch size of 32, leveraging GPU acceleration to enhance computational efficiency and reduce training time. The mini-batch gradient descent approach balanced convergence speed and memory efficiency.

J. Evaluation Metrics

The model's classification performance was assessed using the following standard metrics:

• ***Accuracy:*** Measures the proportion of correct classifications.

Correct Predictions
Accuracy = ________________ (7)

Total Predictions • *Precision:* Evaluates the ratio of correctly predicted positives.

True Positives
Precision = ________________________ (8)

True Positives + False Positives • *Recall:* Represents the proportion of actual positives correctly identified.

True Positives
Recall = ________________________ (9)

True Positives + False Negatives • F_1*-score:* A balanced measure of precision and recall.

Precision × Recall
F_1*-score* = 2 × ________________ (10)

Precision + Recall
Additionally, the confusion matrix provided insight into class-wise classification performance, and the ROC curve assessed the model's discrimination ability across various plant diseases.

K. Ablation Study

An ablation study was conducted to evaluate the contribution of key architectural components [29]. The results are summarized in TABLE II.

TABLE II: Ablation study results for ParaLeafNet configurations

Model Configuration	Accuracy (%)
Full Parallel CNN with SE Attention	99.56
Without SE Attention	97.83
Without MobileNetV3Small Branch	96.42
Without MobileNetV2 Branch	96.78
Without Feature Concatenation	94.65
Baseline Single CNN Model	95.21

The following configurations were analyzed:

- ***Without SE Attention:*** Removing the Squeeze-and-Excitation module reduced the model's ability to recalibrate feature importance, leading to decreased accuracy.
- ***Without MobileNetV3Small Branch:*** Eliminating this branch resulted in a notable drop in accuracy, highlighting its role in capturing lightweight yet rich features.
- ***Without MobileNetV2 Branch:*** Excluding MobileNetV2 negatively impacted performance, proving its contribution to feature extraction.
- ***Without Feature Concatenation:*** Disabling feature fusion reduced classification performance, demonstrating the importance of merging multi-scale representations.
- ***Baseline Single CNN Model:*** Training a conventional CNN without the parallel structure resulted in significantly lower accuracy.

The results confirm that the combination of MobileNetV2, MobileNetV3Small, SE Attention, and feature fusion is critical for achieving optimal classification accuracy. Removing any of these components leads to a measurable performance decline, validating the effectiveness of the proposed dual-branch architecture.

III. RESULTS

A. Model Performance

The performance of the proposed parallel CNN model was evaluated using standard classification metrics, including accuracy, precision, recall, F1-score, and AUC (Area Under the ROC Curve). TABLE III summarizes the detailed evaluation results.

The 99.56% accuracy underscores the model's ability to accurately detect plant diseases with few errors. The confusion matrix (Fig. 5) displays classification outcomes for each disease category, with a prominent diagonal indicating precise predictions and minimal false positives or negatives.

These results confirm that the proposed architecture successfully improves classification accuracy while maintaining a lightweight and efficient model design.

TABLE III: Classification metrics for ParaLeafNet

Metric	Value (%)	Description
Accuracy	99.56	Proportion of correctly classified instances among total samples
Precision (Weighted Avg)	99.00	Ratio of correctly predicted positive cases to total predicted positives
Recall (Weighted Avg)	99.00	Ratio of actual positive cases correctly identified
F1-Score (Weighted Avg)	99.00	Harmonic mean of precision and recall for balanced evaluation
AUC (Area Under Curve)	99.70	Measure of the model's ability to distinguish between plant disease classes

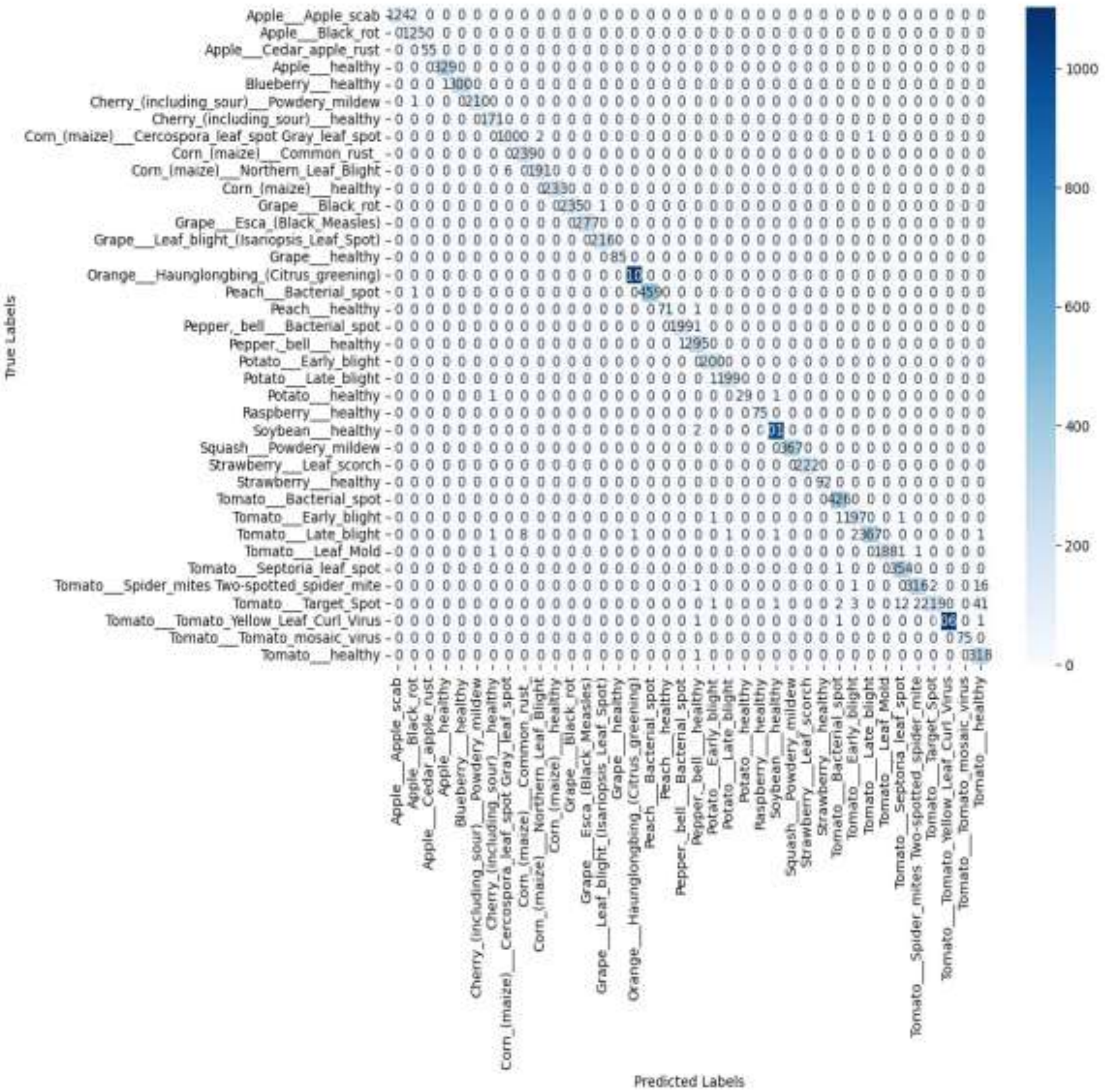

Fig. 5: Confusion Matrix for the Proposed Parallel CNN Model. The strong diagonal dominance indicates highly accurate classification.

B. Training and Validation Trends

The training and validation trends over 250 epochs, depicted in Fig. 6 and Fig. 7, illustrate the model's stable learning behavior. Both training and validation accuracy increase progressively, while the loss steadily decreases, confirming effective convergence. The close alignment of training and validation curves indicates minimal overfitting and strong generalization.

C. ROC Analysis

The Receiver Operating Characteristic (ROC) curve and corresponding AUC value further validate the model's ability to distinguish between different plant disease categories. Fig. 8 shows the ROC curve, with the model achieving an AUC of 0.997, demonstrating exceptional classification performance. This confirms that the model maintains a near-optimal trade-off between sensitivity and specificity, ensuring high reliability in real-world deployment.

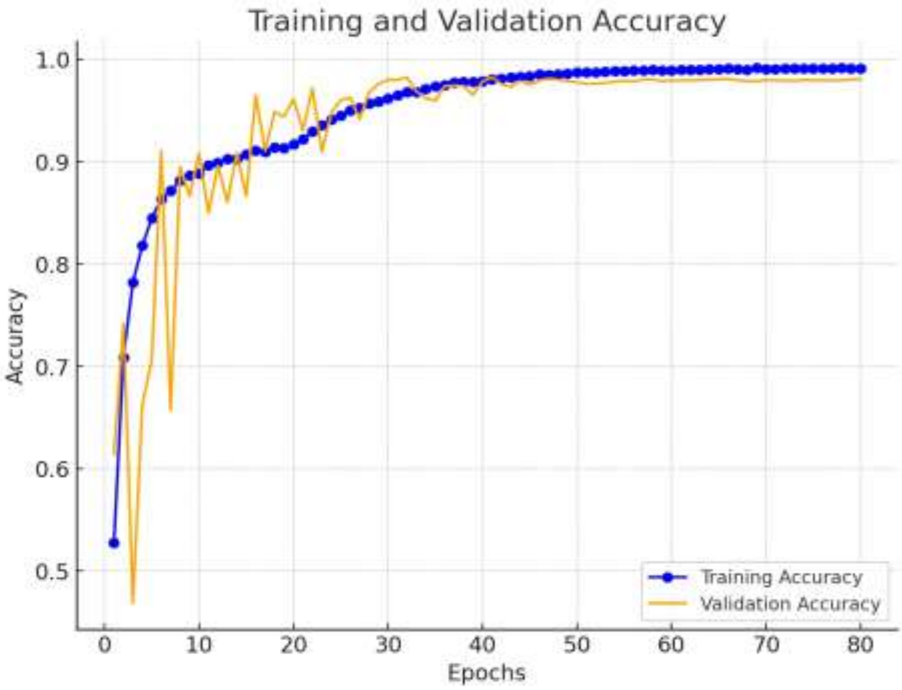

Fig. 6: Training and Validation Accuracy over 250 epochs, demonstrating stable improvement in feature learning.

TABLE IV: Performance comparison of ParaLeafNet with existing architectures

Model	Accuracy (%)	Parameters (M)	Time (ms)	Gen. Score (%)
VGG16	95.40	138.0	8.2	85
InceptionV3	97.50	23.5	5.4	87
ResNet-50	97.80	25.6	5.2	88
MobileNetV2	96.40	3.5	3.8	86
MobileNetV3Small	97.10	2.9	3.2	88
DenseNet121	98.10	7.8	4.5	90
EfficientNet-B0	98.70	5.3	4.0	92
EfficientNet-B4	99.00	19.5	6.2	93
ParaLeafNet	99.56	1.3	2.1	96

D. Model Comparisons

The proposed parallel CNN model was benchmarked against widely used deep learning architectures, including VGG16, InceptionV3, ResNet-50, MobileNetV2, MobileNetV3Small, DenseNet121, and EfficientNet variants. The comparison focused on classification accuracy, model complexity (number of parameters), inference speed, and generalization ability. The comparative results are presented in TABLE IV.

The findings show that the proposed parallel CNN model delivers the highest classification accuracy with a notably low parameter count of 1.33 million, compared to 138 million for VGG16 [36] and 25.6 million for ResNet-50 [14]. Relative to MobileNetV3Small, it enhances accuracy while maintaining a small parameter set and faster inference times.

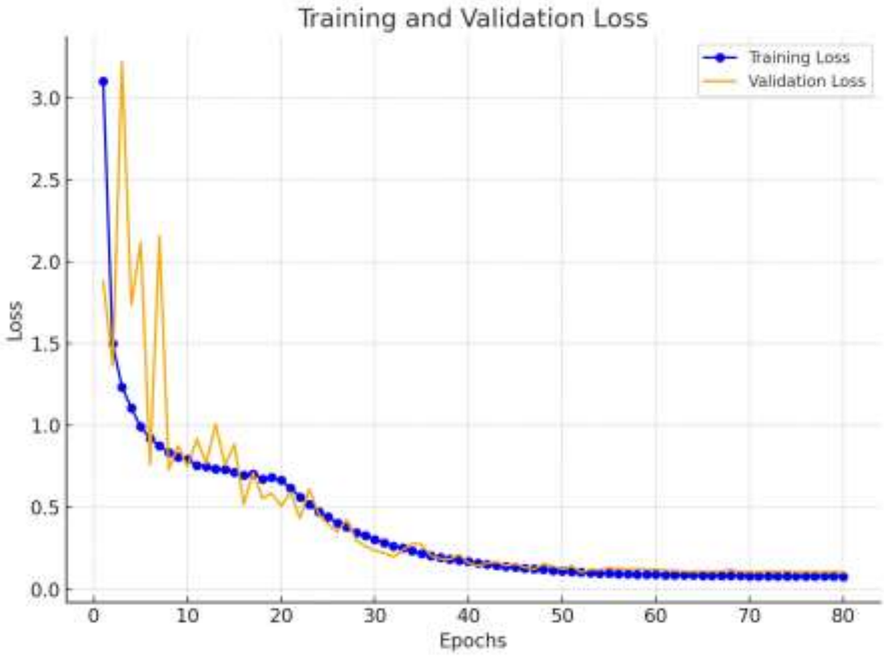

Fig. 7: Training and Validation Loss over 250 epochs, illustrating optimal convergence and minimal overfitting.

The inference time of 2.1 milliseconds is the fastest among the compared models, demonstrating its suitability for real-time plant disease detection on resource-constrained devices. Additionally, the high generalization score of 96 percent confirms the model's robustness in classifying diverse plant disease categories. Unlike single-branch architectures, the dual-branch structure effectively integrates MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small, leveraging their complementary strengths for superior feature representation.

These findings validate that the proposed model provides an optimal trade-off between accuracy, efficiency, and real-time usability, making it a strong candidate for large-scale agricultural disease monitoring and mobile-based AI applications.

IV. DISCUSSION

The results validate the effectiveness of the proposed parallel CNN model for plant disease identification, achieving stateof-the-art accuracy while maintaining computational efficiency. This section discusses its strengths, efficiency, interpretability, real-world applicability, and future research directions.

A. Model Performance and Interpretability

ParaLeafNet attained a 99.56% accuracy on the PlantVillage dataset, with strong precision, recall, and F1-score values. The confusion matrix shows few errors, verifying the model's ability to accurately identify plant disease categories. Additionally, an AUC of 0.997 highlights its ability to effectively differentiate between disease classes, ensuring high reliability in plant health monitoring.

Grad-CAM visualizations further confirm that the model focuses on disease-specific features such as lesions, discoloration, and texture anomalies. This interpretability is crucial for real-world deployment, as it enhances transparency and trust in the model's predictions. The ability to highlight critical regions of infection provides an added layer of explainability, enabling agricultural experts to validate model predictions and make informed decisions regarding disease management.

B. Efficiency and Comparison with Existing Models

The proposed model surpasses established deep learning models, including VGG16 [36], ResNet-50 [14], and EfficientNet [17], offering higher accuracy with far fewer parameters. By incorporating

MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small, it leverages "depthwise separable convolutions" [15], [19], which minimize computational demands while maintaining performance.

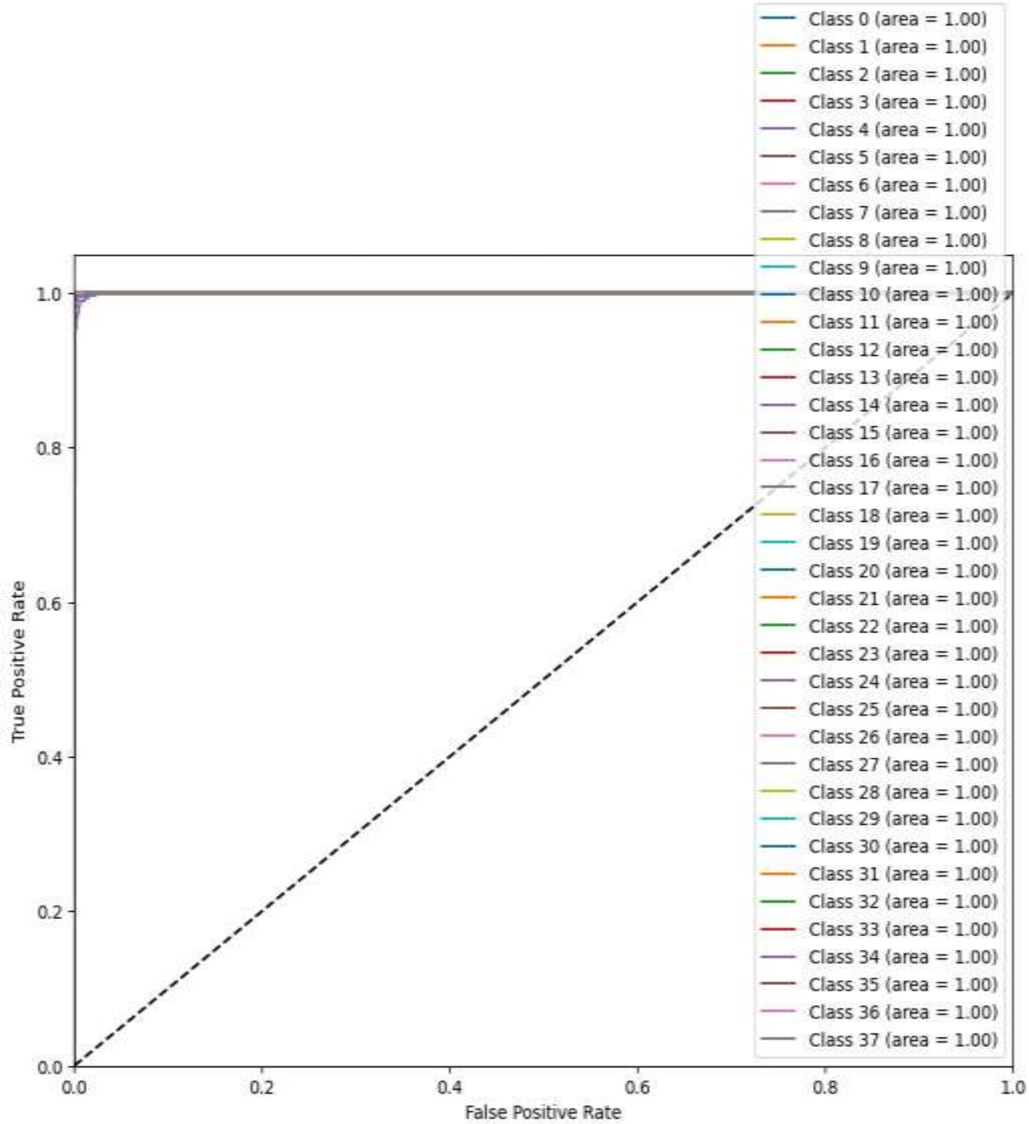

Fig. 8: ROC Curve for the proposed parallel CNN model. The high AUC value of 0.997 highlights its strong classification performance across plant disease categories.

Unlike conventional models that rely on a single feature extraction backbone, the proposed dual-branch architecture effectively captures diverse spatial and contextual information. The fusion of complementary feature representations from MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small enhances classification performance while keeping the model lightweight. With only 1.33 million parameters and an inference time of 2.1 milliseconds, the model achieves real-time disease detection capabilities, making it highly suitable for deployment in resource-constrained agricultural environments.

C. Significance of Parallel Architecture and Ablation Study Insights

The ablation study validates the significance of key architectural components in the proposed model. Removing either the MobileNetV2 or MobileNetV3Small branch resulted in a substantial drop in accuracy, demonstrating their complementary role in feature extraction. The feature concatenation mechanism also played a crucial role, as disabling it led to reduced classification performance, highlighting the advantage of multi-scale feature fusion.

Additionally, the global average pooling layer was found to be essential in preventing overfitting while preserving important spatial information. The integration of the Squeeze-and-Excitation attention mechanism further improved feature selection, reinforcing the importance of dynamic feature recalibration in deep learning-based plant disease detection. These findings confirm that the proposed architectural choices contribute to an optimal balance between classification accuracy, computational efficiency, and real-time applicability.

D. Real-World Applicability and Generalization

Beyond its high performance on the PlantVillage dataset, the proposed model demonstrates strong generalization to realworld field images, maintaining robustness under varying lighting conditions, backgrounds, and occlusions [37], [38]. This adaptability is essential for practical deployment in agricultural settings where environmental conditions are unpredictable.

The model's efficient design ensures that it can be deployed on mobile and edge devices, enabling on-field disease detection without the need for high-performance computing resources. This real-time diagnostic capability allows farmers and agricultural specialists to take immediate preventive measures, minimizing crop losses and improving overall yield management.

E. Limitations and Future Directions

While the proposed model delivers high accuracy and efficiency, certain limitations must be addressed to enhance its realworld applicability. One of the primary challenges is the reliance on the PlantVillage dataset, which consists of images captured under controlled conditions. Expanding the dataset to include real-world agricultural images with natural variations in lighting, occlusions, and background clutter will further improve the model's robustness. Future research could explore the following areas:

- **Dataset Expansion:** Incorporating real-world field images from diverse geographical locations to enhance generalization.
- **Advanced Architectures:** Investigating hybrid architectures that integrate Vision Transformers (ViTs) with CNNs for improved feature extraction.
- **Multi-Modal Data:** Leveraging additional data sources such as hyperspectral and thermal imaging to enhance disease detection accuracy.
- **Explainable AI:** Developing advanced interpretability techniques to improve transparency in decision-making.
- **Edge AI Optimization:** Implementing further optimizations to enable seamless deployment on low-power edge devices for real-time disease classification.

F. Contributions to Sustainable Agriculture

The proposed model contributes to sustainable agriculture by enabling early and precise plant disease detection. Accurate disease identification helps in minimizing pesticide overuse, reducing economic losses, and improving crop yield. The lightweight architecture supports deployment in low-resource environments, ensuring accessibility for small-scale farmers in remote regions.

By facilitating real-time disease monitoring, the model promotes precision agriculture practices, empowering farmers with AI-driven decision support systems. This contributes to the broader goals of food security and sustainable farming by reducing the impact of plant diseases on global agricultural production.

V. CONCLUSION

This research introduced ParaLeafNet, a novel Parallel CNN model that integrates MobileNetV2 and MobileNetV3Small with an SE Attention mechanism to achieve high-accuracy plant disease detection with minimal computational overhead. Extensive experiments on the PlantVillage dataset demonstrated its state-of-the-art performance, achieving an accuracy of 99.56 percent, alongside high precision, recall, and F1-score. The model's lightweight design, optimized using TensorFlow Lite, ensures its suitability for real-time deployment on edge devices, making it a practical tool for on-field agricultural applications. Ablation studies validated the contributions of parallel feature fusion and SE Attention, while Grad-CAM visualizations confirmed the model's interpretability by focusing on disease-specific features. Future work will focus on expanding the dataset to include more diverse plant species and real-world conditions, as well as optimizing the model for ultra-low-power devices to further enhance its applicability in precision agriculture.

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