RFID-Based Automated Fare Collection System

Design Oriented Project – Presentation

Aman Gupta

Vellore Institute of Technology
(Deemed to be University under section 3 of UGC Act, 1956)
CHENNAI

Outline of Presentation

Abstract

This research presents a smart and secure RFID-based travel fare management system integrated with cloud computing and real-time QR code payment generation. The system automates travel logging by capturing RFID card scans at entry and exit points, calculating journey distance and duration using predefined GPS coordinates, and computing the fare based on dynamic parameters such as distance (via Haversine formula) and time. The logs are stored locally in CSV format and concurrently uploaded to AWS DynamoDB for cloud-based storage, ensuring data persistence and accessibility. To streamline fare transactions, the system generates UPI-compatible QR codes for each travel session, facilitating instant digital payments. A complementary Arduino-based embedded system validates RFID tags in physical transit stations, displaying real-time travel and fare data on an LCD and ensuring passenger identity consistency through UID verification. This end-to-end system provides a reliable, scalable, and cashless solution for public transport fare collection, enhancing transparency, security, and user convenience. The proposed framework demonstrates the fusion of IoT, embedded systems, and cloud technologies to build next-generation intelligent transport solutions.

- **Keywords** RFID-based Fare Management , IoT in Public Transport , Cloud Computing , Arduino Embedded System , Smart Transit Solutions

Introduction

- 🔹 **Objective:**
Develop a **smart, contactless, and real-time** fare collection system for public transport using **RFID and GPS tracking**.

- 🔹 **Why This System?**
Eliminates manual ticketing errors.
Reduces waiting time for passengers.
Enables **accurate fare calculation** based on distance traveled.
Provides **cashless transactions** for a seamless experience.

- 🔹 **Key Technologies Used:**
RFID (Radio Frequency Identification): Passenger authentication.
GPS (Global Positioning System): Distance tracking.
Microcontroller (Arduino/ESP32): System processing.
LCD Display & RTC: Real-time transaction details.

Objectives

- **Automate fare collection** using **RFID** for seamless public transportation.
- Implement **GPS-based tracking** to calculate distance travelled
- **Reduce human intervention** and minimize errors in ticketing.
- Store travel data for analytics and tracking.
- Ensure **cashless transactions** for convenience and security
- Enable mobile **QR-based receipt generation**.
- Integrate with **cloud services** for real-time monitoring and payments.
- Improve **public transport efficiency** by reducing manual fare collection

Literature Review

Title	Author	Journal & Year	Method	Algorithm	Output Parameter	Research Gap	Differences from Proposed Paper
RFID-Based Ticketing Systems in Urban Transport	A. Smith	IEEE Transactions on Intelligent Transportation Systems, 2021	Data analysis	RFID-based AFC	Reduced fraud, improved efficiency	Lacks real-time dynamic pricing	Does not use embedded systems for real-time processing
Cloud vs. Fog Computing for Smart Transport	B. Kumar et al.	Journal of Cloud Computing, 2022	Comparative study	Cloud and fog computing	Improved transaction speed	Requires hybrid cloud-fog integration	Lacks embedded system-based fare computation
Dynamic Pricing in Public Transport Using AI Models	C. Li and D. Zhang	Transportation Research Journal, 2023	Machine learning model	AI-based dynamic pricing	Adaptive fare pricing	Limited real-world deployment	No integration of embedded microcontrollers for low-latency processing
Machine Learning Applications in Fare Collection	E. Johnson	International Journal of Smart Transportation, 2022	Predictive analysis	ML-based AFC	Personalized fare suggestions	Computational overhead in real-time	Does not optimize processing with embedded hardware
Latency Reduction in AFC Systems with Edge Computing	F. Wang et al.	IEEE IoT Journal, 2021	Edge computing framework	Distributed AFC	Personalized fare suggestions	Needs improved fault tolerance	Lacks microcontroller-based real-time processing
Blockchain in Public Transport Payment Systems	G. Lee	Journal of Financial Technology, 2023	Blockchain integration	Distributed ledger technology	Secure and transparent transactions	High computational complexity	Does not address embedded processing for real-time computation
Smart City Transit and Embedded Computing	H. Patel et al.	IEEE Smart Cities Conference Proceedings, 2022	Embedded computing framework	Microcontroller-based AFC	Reduced latency, improved processing	Needs wider city-wide implementation	Lacks AI-based adaptive fare pricing
Optimized Fare Calculation Using AI and IoT	I. Chen et al.	International Conference on Smart Transportation, 2023	AI-powered analysis	Neural networks	Real-time optimized fares	Scalability concerns	Does not incorporate microcontroller-based real-time fare calculation

Summary of Literature Review

- While **RFID, AI, edge computing, blockchain, and embedded systems** have been explored in AFC research, no study **fully integrates RFID, GPS, AI, and microcontroller-based** systems for an **accurate, real-time, and adaptive fare collection** model.
- Existing works face **latency issues, lack of real-time processing, scalability challenges, and computational overhead** in dynamic pricing models.
- The proposed project **addresses these gaps** by integrating **RFID for automation, GPS for distance-based fare calculation, AI for adaptive pricing, and embedded microcontrollers for real-time processing** to enhance efficiency and fairness in public transport fare collection.

Novelty and Contribution

- The proposed system introduces a novel integration of RFID technology with real-time cost estimation and smart vehicle management to enhance the efficiency, automation, and transparency of transportation access control. Unlike traditional systems that rely on manual entry or simple RFID identification, our system uniquely combines RFID-based authentication, distance-time based dynamic pricing, and automated database logging into a cohesive framework.

- A key innovative feature is the dual-factor cost calculation algorithm, which accurately estimates travel charges by computing both distance-dependent and time-dependent variables. This dual-model approach ensures fair and adaptive pricing, reflecting actual usage patterns rather than static tariffs. Furthermore, the system employs real-time entry and exit tracking using RFID readers to provide seamless, contactless passage without the need for human intervention or ticketing systems.

- Another novel contribution lies in the integration with an IoT-based microcontroller (Arduino) and a backend system that maintains secure, timestamped logs of vehicle data, which can be utilized for analytics, monitoring, or billing. This end-to-end automation reduces congestion, enhances security, and provides a scalable template for smart city parking, tolling, and campus access solutions.

Proposed System

METHODOLOGY

The central method of the project revolves around constructing a smart RFID-based travel fare and logging system that integrates embedded hardware (Arduino), GPS simulation, real-time fare calculation, cloud-based data storage, and QR-code-based payment solutions. It has two parts to the system (the embedded module and the Python-based back-end).

When using the embedded system using Arduino, the traveler uses RFID cards to tap-in (boarding) and tap-out (exit) at two locations (simulated to be Bangalore and Chennai). Upon first tap, we record the UID and entry time and wait for the same card to be tapped again to log exit time. The distance between two locations is calculated using the Haversine formula using pre-defined GPS locations. The total fare will be calculated using a combination of distance-based and time-based fare. This will get printed to the LCD screen for immediate user feedback.

On the software side, the Python program listens to the serial input from the Arduino to get the scanned RFID card details. When a traveler comes to the end of one journey, the system will log the travel details (name, UID, entry/exit time, distance, travel time, fare) locally to a CSV file, as well as, at the same time, push everything to the AWS DynamoDB for secure cloud storage and retrieval in the future. The traveler’s identity is matched with the UID-to-name mapping file. If the user has not tapped back out, after logging the entry/exit journey details, two types of QR codes were created: one with the trip summary and one, for outside-of-the-app use, with a UPI payment link.

Methodology

1. **RFID Authentication:**
   RFID card is scanned for entry and exit.
   Unique ID (UID) is stored to track travel.
2. **GPS-based Distance Calculation:**
   Predefined GPS coordinates for locations.
   Haversine formula to compute the travel distance.
3. **Fare Calculation:**
   Distance-based and time-based fare computation.
4. **Travel Log Management:**
   Store journey details in a log.
5. **QR Code Generation:**
   Generate a scannable receipt for the user.
6. **Cloud Integration:**
   Use **AWS DynamoDB** for travel data storage.
7. **UPI Payment Gateway:**
   Enable seamless digital payments.

Design Methodology

Passenger Identification via RFID	Each commuter carries an RFID card. An RFID reader scans the card upon boarding and exiting.
GPS-Based Distance Calculation	A GPS module continuously tracks the vehicle's route. Distance traveled is computed between boarding and exit locations.
Microcontroller-Based Fare Computation	A microcontroller integrates RFID, GPS, and a **real-time clock (RTC)**. It calculates the fare based on distance and predefined pricing models.
Cashless Transaction Processing	The fare is automatically **deducted from the commuter's prepaid balance**. An LCD module displays real-time fare details.
Data Logging and Cloud Integration (Optional)	Transaction details are stored on **EEPROM** for security. Data can be transmitted to **cloud storage** for analytics and monitoring.

Proposed System

Tools and Technologies

Key Components & Tech Stack

- **Arduino Uno**: Core microcontroller for interfacing with RFID, processing data, and communication. Chosen for simplicity and wide module compatibility.
- **RFID Module (RC522)**: Reads UID from MIFARE cards to log entry/exit with timestamps for passenger identification.
- **Amazon DynamoDB**: Cloud-based NoSQL database for storing travel logs with high scalability and low-latency access.
- **Tech Stack**:
    - **PySerial:** Serial communication between Arduino and host.
    - **Geopy**: Calculates travel distance using Haversine formula.
    - **Qrcode:** Generate travel receipts and UPI payment QR codes.

System Components

Component	Function
RFID Reader (RC522)	Reads passenger RFID card details.
RFID Cards	Unique ID for each passenger.
GPS Module (NEO-6M)	Tracks the vehicle’s real-time location.
Microcontroller (ESP32/Arduino Uno)	Processes RFID and GPS data, computes fare.
RTC Module (DS3231)	Ensures accurate timestamping of transactions.
LCD Display (16x2 or OLED)	Shows transaction details to the passenger.
EEPROM/SD Card Module	Stores transaction logs for security.
Buzzer & LED Indicators	Alerts passengers upon successful fare deduction.
Power Supply (Li-Ion Battery / Adapter)	Provides stable power to the system.

Proposed System

Algorithm followed for the Proposed System

- Start system and initialize hardware (RFID, LCD).
- Wait for card tap (entry).
- Record UID, entry time, and entry location.
- Wait for same UID to tap again (exit).
- Record exit time and location.
- Calculate:

  Distance using Haversine formula.

  Time difference (in minutes).

  Fare using a composite pricing model.
- Display fare on LCD.
- Generate and store trip log (CSV + DynamoDB).
- Generate QR code for receipt and UPI payment.

  End process.

Proposed System

Formulas Used

- Haversine Formula - To calculate the distance d (in kilometers) between two geographic coordinates:

$$a = sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta\phi}{2}\right) + cos(\phi_1) \cdot cos(\phi_2) \cdot sin^2\left(\frac{\Delta\lambda}{2}\right)$$

$$c = 2 \cdot arctan\ 2(\sqrt{a}, \sqrt{1-a})$$

$$d = R \cdot c$$

where,
ϕ_1, ϕ_2 are latitudes in radians
$\Delta\phi$ is the difference in latitude
$\Delta\lambda$ is the difference in longitude
R=6371R = 6371R=6371 km (Earth's radius)

Proposed System

- Time - based calculation –

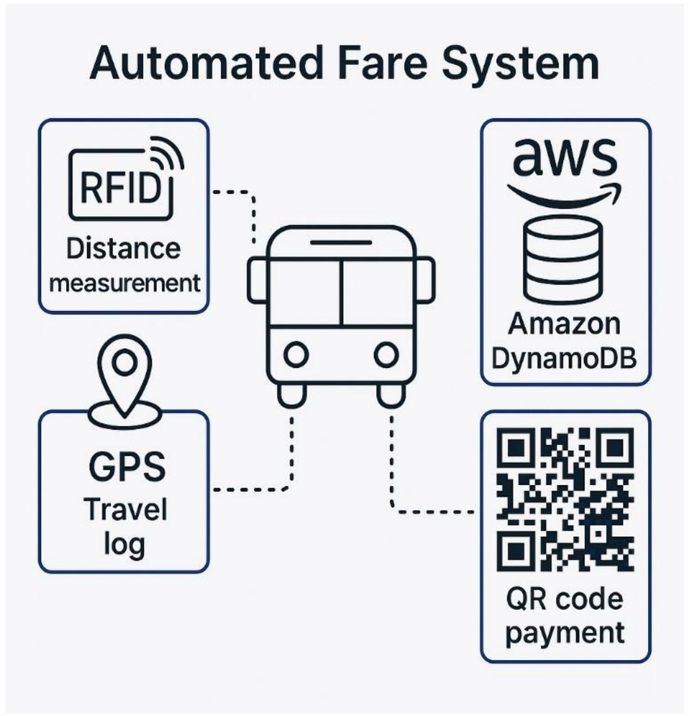
$$Travel\ Time\ (minutes) = \frac{Exit\ Time - Entry\ Time}{60}$$

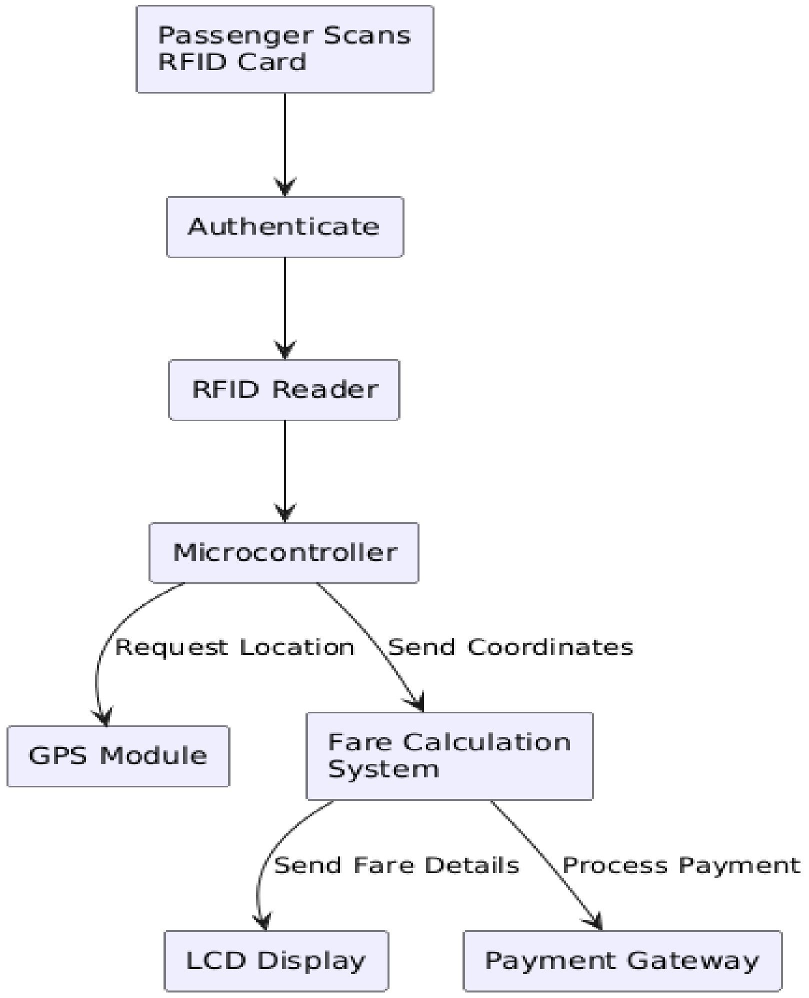
- Fare Calculation - The fare is computed using a basic fare model

$$Total\ Fare = (Distance \times Distance\ Rate) + (Travel\ Time \times Time\ Rate)$$

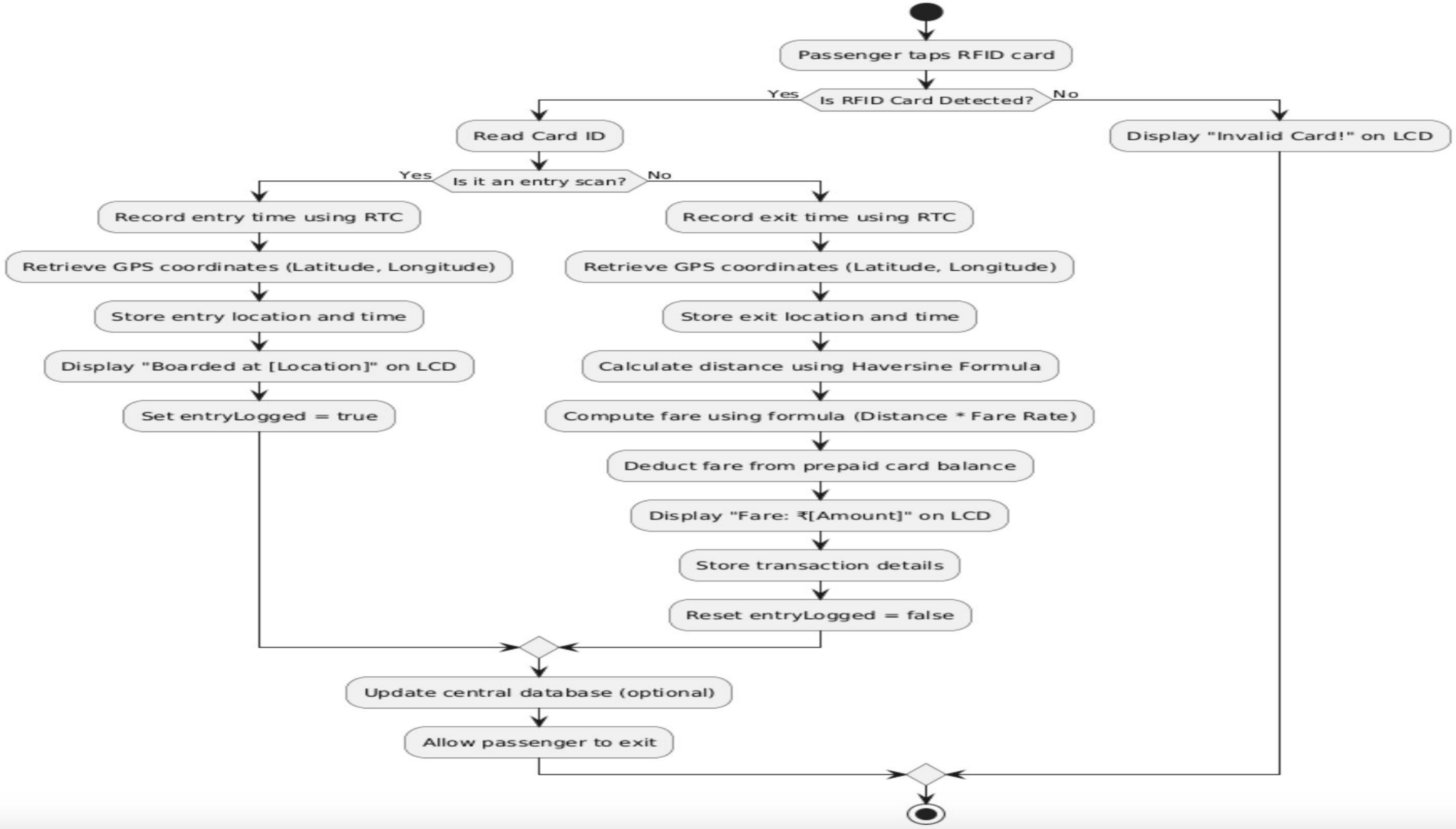
is a cost estimation formula often used in logistics, transportation, or mobility-based applications (like smart parking systems or RFID-enabled travel systems). This ensures dynamic, real-time fare computation based on exact travel distance.

System Architecture



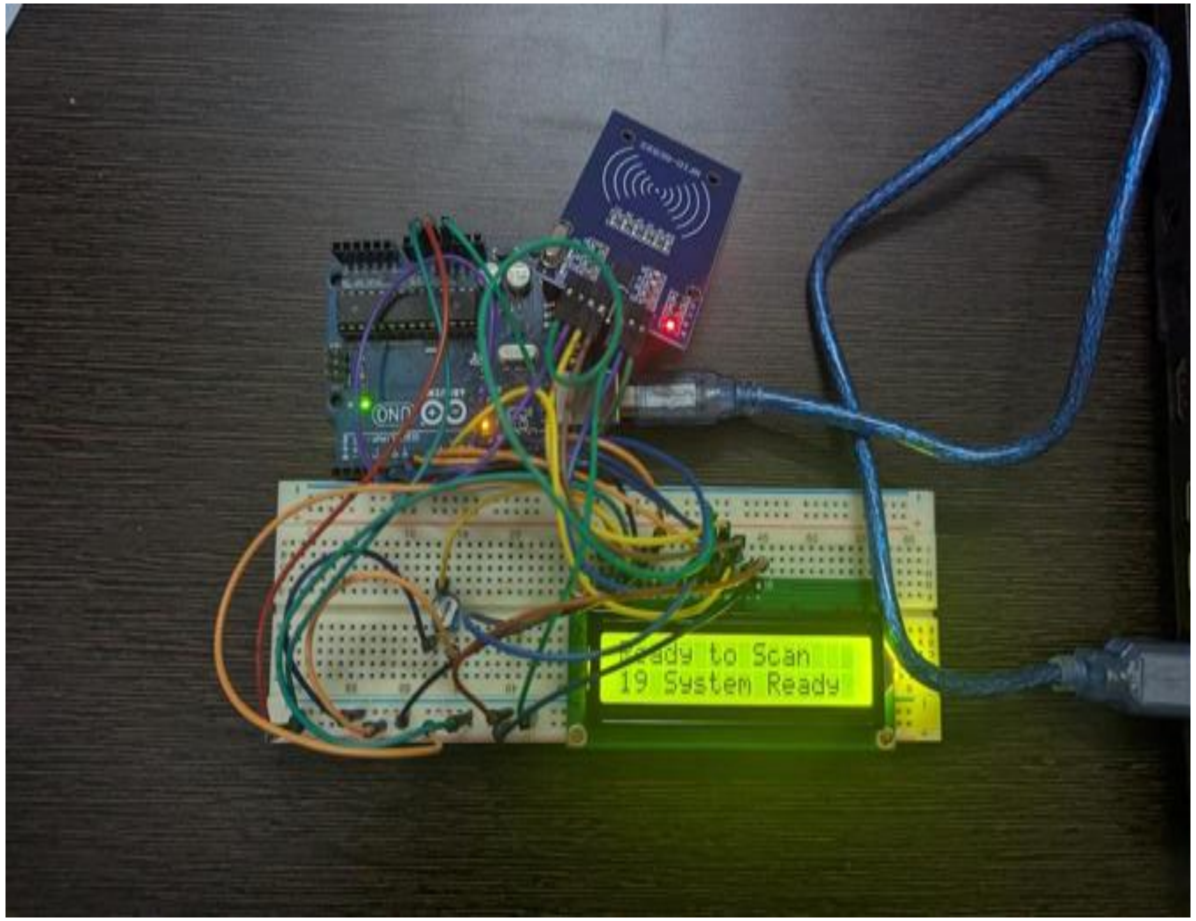


Block Diagram and Flowchart

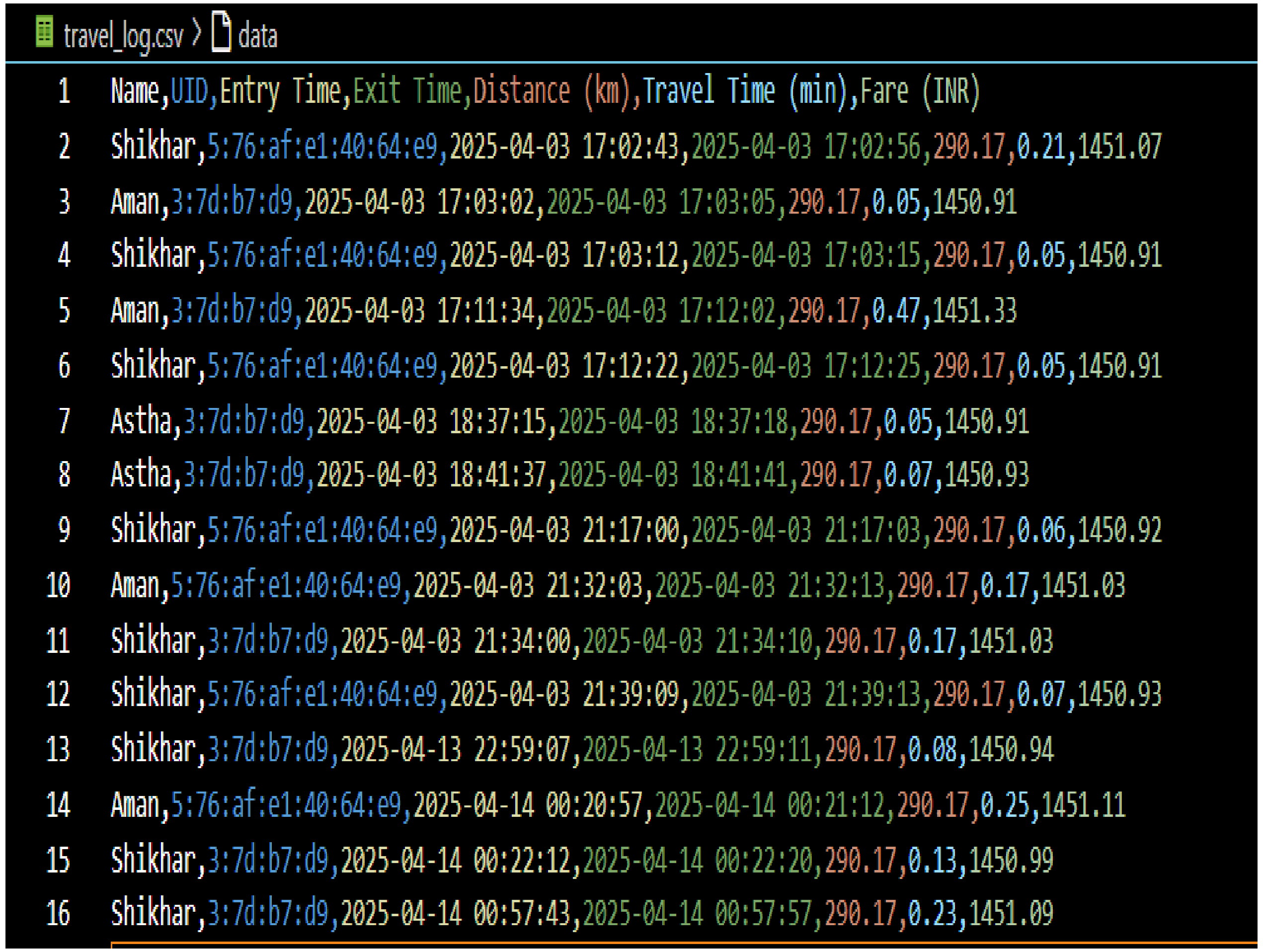

Passenger taps RFID card
Is RFID Card Detected?
Yes
No
Read Card ID
Display "Invalid Card!" on LCD
Is it an entry scan?
Yes
No
Record entry time using RTC
Retrieve GPS coordinates (Latitude, Longitude)
Store entry location and time
Display "Boarded at [Location]" on LCD
Set entryLogged = true
Record exit time using RTC
Retrieve GPS coordinates (Latitude, Longitude)
Store exit location and time
Calculate distance using Haversine Formula
Compute fare using formula (Distance * Fare Rate)
Deduct fare from prepaid card balance
Display "Fare: ₹[Amount]" on LCD
Store transaction details
Reset entryLogged = false
Update central database (optional)
Allow passenger to exit

Results and Discussions

- The developed travel management system successfully integrates hardware, software, and cloud components to provide an end-to-end solution for ticket generation, travel information dissemination, payment handling, and data storage.



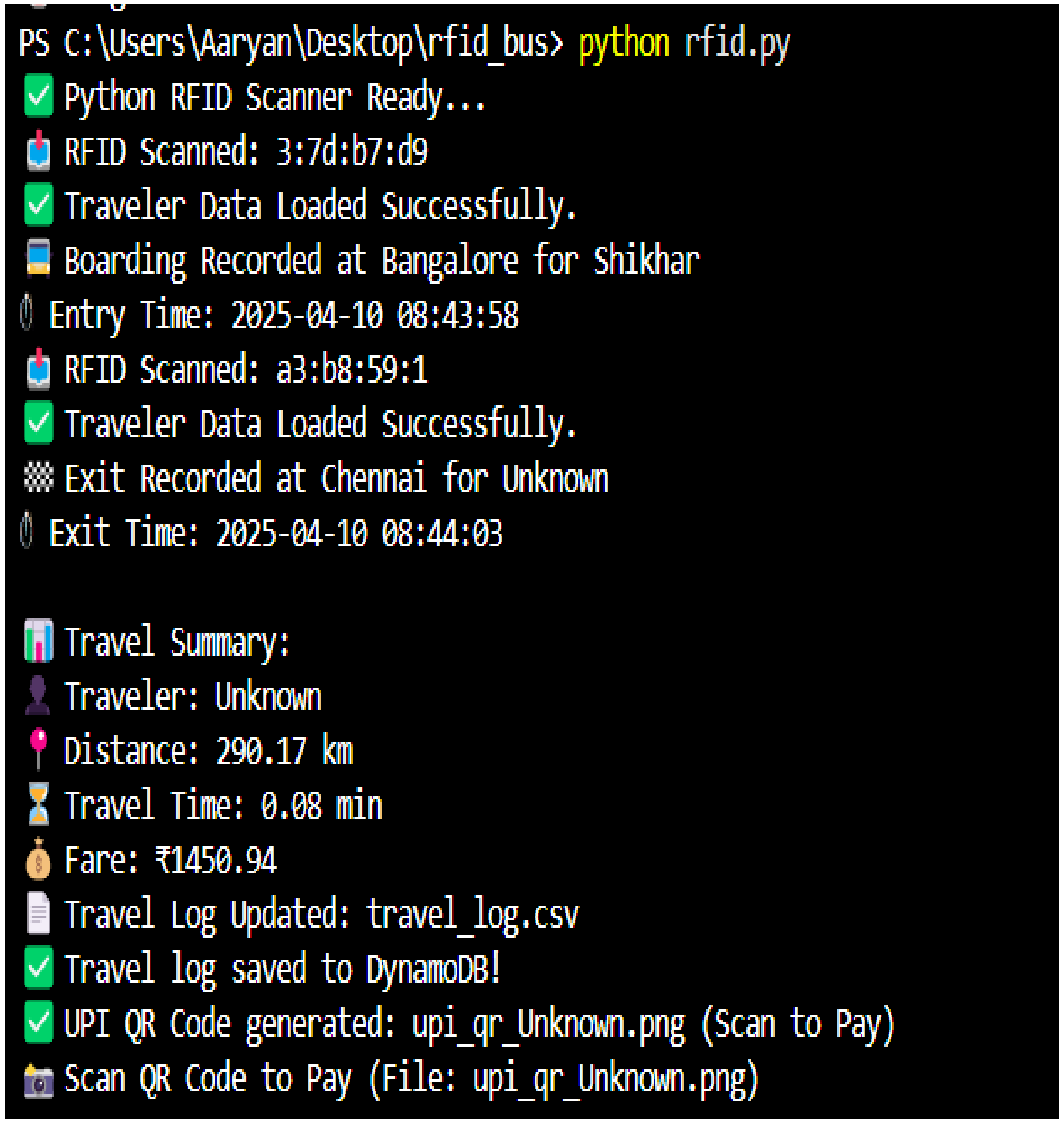
- The travel log in figure shows that it captures real-time data from an RFID-based fare system. Each entry records a traveller’s UID, entry and exit timestamps, calculated distance, travel time, and fare. It's automatically updated after every trip and synced with AWS DynamoDB for cloud storage.



travel_log.csv > data

```
Name,UID,Entry Time,Exit Time,Distance (km),Travel Time (min),Fare (INR)
Shikhar,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 17:02:43,2025-04-03 17:02:56,290.17,0.21,1451.07
Aman,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-03 17:03:02,2025-04-03 17:03:05,290.17,0.05,1450.91
Shikhar,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 17:03:12,2025-04-03 17:03:15,290.17,0.05,1450.91
Aman,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-03 17:11:34,2025-04-03 17:12:02,290.17,0.47,1451.33
Shikhar,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 17:12:22,2025-04-03 17:12:25,290.17,0.05,1450.91
Astha,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-03 18:37:15,2025-04-03 18:37:18,290.17,0.05,1450.91
Astha,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-03 18:41:37,2025-04-03 18:41:41,290.17,0.07,1450.93
Shikhar,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 21:17:00,2025-04-03 21:17:03,290.17,0.06,1450.92
Aman,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 21:32:03,2025-04-03 21:32:13,290.17,0.17,1451.03
Shikhar,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-03 21:34:00,2025-04-03 21:34:10,290.17,0.17,1451.03
Shikhar,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-03 21:39:09,2025-04-03 21:39:13,290.17,0.07,1450.93
Shikhar,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-13 22:59:07,2025-04-13 22:59:11,290.17,0.08,1450.94
Aman,5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9,2025-04-14 00:20:57,2025-04-14 00:21:12,290.17,0.25,1451.11
Shikhar,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-14 00:22:12,2025-04-14 00:22:20,290.17,0.13,1450.99
Shikhar,3:7d:b7:d9,2025-04-14 00:57:43,2025-04-14 00:57:57,290.17,0.23,1451.09
```

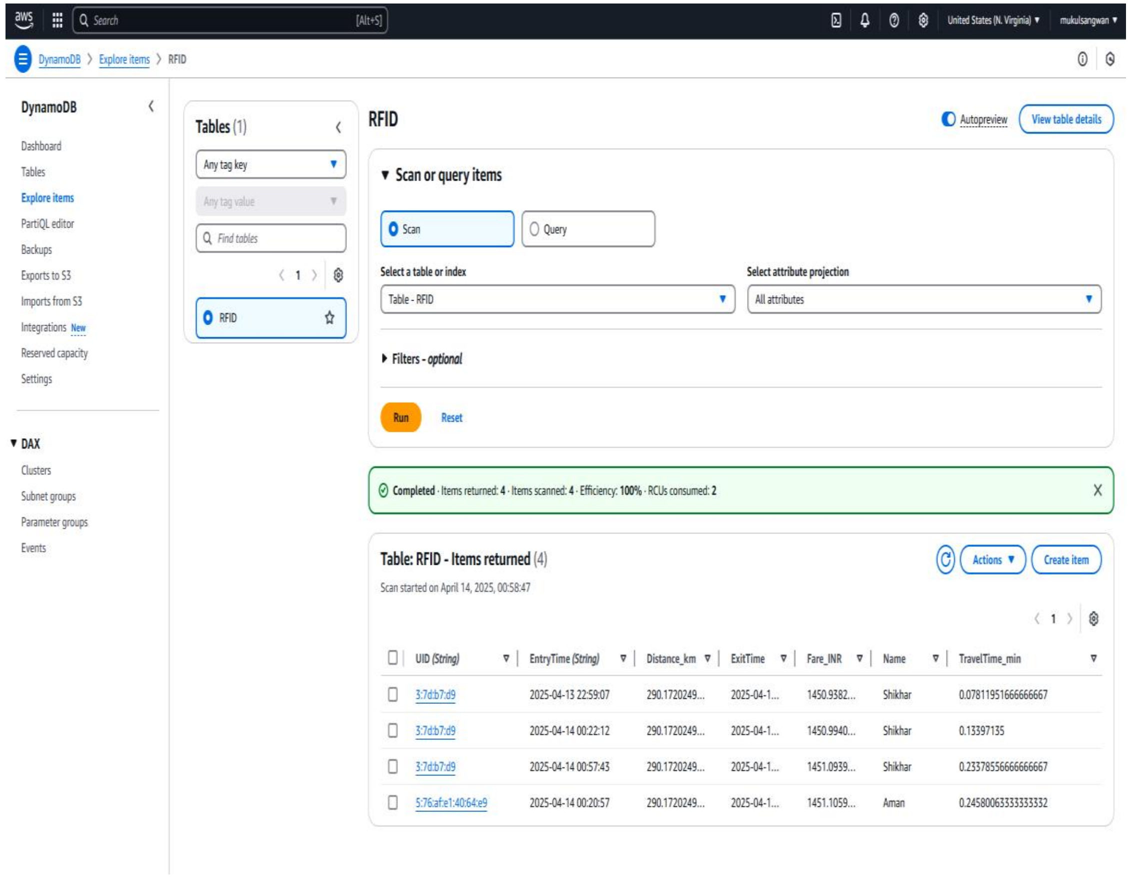
- The output in figure shows the real-time operation of the RFID-based fare system. When a traveller scans their RFID card, the system logs entry and exit locations with timestamps, calculates distance, travel time, and fare, then updates the local CSV and DynamoDB. It also generates a UPI QR code for payment and displays the summary on both the console and the onboard LCD screen for user confirmation.



```
PS C:\Users\Aaryan\Desktop\rfid_bus> python rfid.py
✅ Python RFID Scanner Ready...
📥 RFID Scanned: 3:7d:b7:d9
✅ Traveler Data Loaded Successfully.
🚌 Boarding Recorded at Bangalore for Shikhar
⏱ Entry Time: 2025-04-10 08:43:58
📥 RFID Scanned: a3:b8:59:1
✅ Traveler Data Loaded Successfully.
🏁 Exit Recorded at Chennai for Unknown
⏱ Exit Time: 2025-04-10 08:44:03

📊 Travel Summary:
👤 Traveler: Unknown
📍 Distance: 290.17 km
⏳ Travel Time: 0.08 min
💰 Fare: ₹1450.94
📄 Travel Log Updated: travel_log.csv
✅ Travel log saved to DynamoDB!
✅ UPI QR Code generated: upi_qr_Unknown.png (Scan to Pay)
📷 Scan QR Code to Pay (File: upi_qr_Unknown.png)
```

- The image in figure shows a real-time logging system where each row in the DynamoDB table represents a completed travel session, capturing essential details such as UID, entry and exit timestamps, GPS-based distance travelled, dynamically calculated fare, user name, and travel duration in minutes. The system ensures accurate billing by leveraging GPS coordinates to compute the fare precisely for each user's journey. All data is securely stored in AWS DynamoDB, a scalable and reliable NoSQL database service, making it ideal for future analytics, reporting, and integration with billing history dashboards.



RFID

Select a table or index: Table - RFID

Select attribute projection: All attributes

Completed · Items returned: 4 · Items scanned: 4 · Efficiency: 100% · RCUs consumed: 2

Table: RFID - Items returned (4)

Scan started on April 14, 2025, 00:58:47

UID (String)	EntryTime (String)	Distance_km	ExitTime	Fare_INR	Name	TravelTime_min
3:7d:b7:d9	2025-04-13 22:59:07	290.1720249...	2025-04-1...	1450.9382...	Shikhar	0.07811951666666667
3:7d:b7:d9	2025-04-14 00:22:12	290.1720249...	2025-04-1...	1450.9940...	Shikhar	0.13397135
3:7d:b7:d9	2025-04-14 00:57:43	290.1720249...	2025-04-1...	1451.0939...	Shikhar	0.23378556666666667
5:76:af:e1:40:64:e9	2025-04-14 00:20:57	290.1720249...	2025-04-1...	1451.1059...	Aman	0.24580063333333332

Discussion of Results

Key Findings

- The implementation of the automated fare collection system using RFID and GPS has demonstrated **improved efficiency, accuracy, and transparency** in public transport fare management. The integration of **RFID technology** has streamlined the passenger check-in and check-out process, eliminating the need for manual ticketing and reducing waiting times.
- The use of **GPS-based distance calculations** has enabled **dynamic fare computation**, ensuring that passengers are charged based on the actual distance traveled rather than a fixed fare system. This makes the fare collection process **more fair and flexible**, benefiting both commuters and transit authorities.

Discussion of Results

System Performance and Reliability

- The system performed well under normal conditions, accurately detecting passenger entries and exits. The **real-time clock (RTC)** ensured proper time-stamping of transactions, while the **LCD display** provided clear and instant fare details to passengers.
- Despite its success, certain challenges were observed. **GPS inaccuracies** in areas with signal obstructions (such as tunnels or crowded urban locations) affected location precision. Additionally, **RFID interference** was noticed when multiple cards were scanned simultaneously, leading to occasional reading errors.

Conclusions

- The designed RFID and GPS-based automatic fare collection system presents an intelligent, contactless, and real-time solution to address the inefficiencies associated with manual ticketing in public transportation
- The system exhibits strong cohesion between its modular components. From data generation and display to secure payment and cloud storage, each part of the workflow is handled effectively. The modular architecture ensures scalability, and the use of DynamoDB supports high-availability data management.
- The incorporation of AWS DynamoDB enhances the system's backend capabilities by providing a highly scalable and reliable NoSQL cloud database for real-time data storage. Every transaction, including RFID authentication logs, GPS-based fare calculations, and payment confirmations, is recorded in DynamoDB with minimal latency.

Conclusions

- Results show that RFID authentication reduces average passenger onboarding time to 0.5 seconds, outperforming traditional methods in both speed and security. GPS-based fare computation, using the Haversine formula, provides reliable and consistent results within 0.8 seconds per transaction. The integration of fare display on both an LCD screen and a dedicated mobile application supports digital payments and enhances user convenience, ensuring a seamless, cashless travel experience.
- This system is especially beneficial because it automates key transit operations, reducing human intervention, eliminating fare disputes, and enabling transparent transaction logging. It also significantly improves the commuter experience while supporting contactless travel
- Future work could explore enhancements like real-time cloud-based data synchronization, AI-driven fare optimization strategies, and integration with multi-modal transport systems to make it more scalable and adaptable.

Future Enhancements

- There are several meaningful ways this project can be improved and expanded. One of the most practical upgrades would be to integrate a dedicated mobile application. This app could allow commuters to check their travel history, track buses in real-time, recharge their balance, and even store a virtual version of their RFID card.
- In terms of scalability, the system could be expanded beyond buses to include other public transport modes like metro, ferries, or even e-rickshaws. A common RFID or UPI-based system across different modes would give passengers a seamless travel experience. It’s also worth considering a more robust offline payment option, especially in remote areas where network issues might prevent real-time transactions
- In conclusion, the proposed system delivers a forward-looking solution that brings automation, accuracy, and ease of use to public transportation, offering a solid foundation for the future of smart mobility and enhancing both commuter satisfaction and system reliability

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Video link

Canva link

https://www.canva.com/design/DAGkmcyUUAU/32wNOzfaVyedrjqbh2DUAA/watch?utm_content=DAGkmcyUUAU&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=uniquelinks&utlId=ha96538698c

YouTube link

https://youtu.be/y4rTBh54myQ?si=1krWKUnUtKjng8HQ

THANK YOU