

# A Vision-Based IoT-Enabled Smart Waste Management System Employing YOLOv8 and ESP32 Microcontrollers

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**Abstract**—In a world grappling with escalating waste generation and environmental concerns, the integration of cutting-edge technologies is essential for effective waste management. The WasteWise project presents a pioneering Waste Management System that combines Image Processing and the Internet of Things (IoT) to revolutionize the way we handle waste. The core innovation lies in the fusion of Image Processing and IoT. Image Processing techniques enable accurate identification and classification of waste items, while IoT provides real-time data for intelligent decision-making. This synergy empowers waste management authorities, reduces environmental impact, and promotes recycling. This paper explores the project's objectives, technological innovations, and its pivotal role in advancing sustainable waste management practices in today's world.

**Index Terms**—Sensors, image processing, Internet of Things, data analytics, waste segregation, computer vision

## I. INTRODUCTION

Global societies face a pressing challenge in waste management due to rapid urbanization and population growth. The effective handling of waste has become essential. Solid waste management is a worldwide issue impacting both individuals and governments. Their choices regarding consumption and waste disposal significantly affect community health, productivity, and cleanliness. Inadequate waste management has severe consequences, such as harming wildlife that accidentally consumes waste, polluting the oceans, blocking drainage systems, spreading disease-carrying vectors, worsening respiratory problems from waste incineration emissions, hindering tourism, and more. Despite substantial efforts to improve waste management practices and mitigate adverse effects, there remains room for enhancement in these methods.[1].

The WasteWise project emerges as an innovative solution to address this pressing issue. It leverages the power of cutting-edge technologies, particularly Image Processing, Internet of Things (IoT) and data analytics, to revolutionize waste management processes. The WasteWise project's primary objective is to create an intelligent waste management system capable

of automating various aspects of waste segregation and management. This system promises to bring about significant improvements in terms of accuracy, environmental sustainability, and cost-effectiveness. The catalyst for this project stems from the realization that traditional waste management methods are often inefficient and environmentally unsustainable [12]. The WasteWise project seeks to bridge this gap by introducing state-of-the-art technology into the waste management ecosystem.

This paper provides an overview of the WasteWise project, highlighting its significance and potential to reshape how we manage waste in the modern world. Section 2 and 3 mentions the related works and the existing waste management systems. Section 4 details the proposed system architecture and the methodology adopted mentioning the advantages and drawbacks. Section 5 mentions the results achieved followed by the references used for this research work.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Padmakshi Venkateshwara Rao and Pathan Mahammed Abdul Azeez, in their study, present an innovative solution called "IoT-based Waste Management for Smart Cities." This system, designed with a cost-effective approach, offers a means to monitor garbage levels in these bins and take prompt action to maintain cleanliness. To achieve this, they utilize the 'Blynk app' to receive immediate SMS notifications when a garbage bin approaches its capacity limit. The core components of their system include ultrasonic sensors, NodeMCU, the Blynk app, and a servo motor [2].

The paper titled "Computer-vision-powered Automatic Waste Sorting Bin: a Machine Learning-based Solution on Waste Management" presents a computer-vision-powered Automatic Waste Sorting Bin, employing machine learning techniques, specifically the YOLOv5 model, controlled by a Raspberry Pi. The study showcases a commendable multiclass accuracy of 93.33% after training the model for 150 epochs,

and the flexibility of this solution is underscored as it can be easily retrained to adapt to various waste types. The paper's significance lies in its demonstration of the potential of computer vision and machine learning in waste management. By successfully applying the YOLOv5 model on a Raspberry Pi, the authors prove that automation in waste sorting is feasible [8].

The paper "Using YOLOv5 for Garbage Classification" addresses the critical issue of waste management in urban and rural areas. The paper introduces a novel garbage classification model, GC-YOLOv5, leveraging computer vision and convolutional neural networks. It achieves remarkable accuracy in classifying various garbage types, even under different conditions and angles, with an average mAP exceeding 99%. Additionally, it enables real-time cloud-based data storage and access, contributing significantly to the field of garbage classification and offering practical solutions for waste management and environmental protection [10].

Nikolaos Baras and Dimitris Ziouzos introduce a solution titled "A cloud-based intelligent recycling bin for sorting household waste." Their system offers an affordable and efficient approach to household waste classification, making use of cloud technology. Through a centralized Information System, data from smart bins is collected, enabling the classification of waste through the application of Artificial Intelligence and neural networks. Remarkably, it achieves a high accuracy rate of 93.4% in distinguishing various waste types [3].

The paper titled "Standalone Frequency Based Automated Trash Bin and Segregator of Plastic Bottles and Tin Cans" presents a system that demonstrates how the piezoelectric amplifier framework can be utilized for input signal acquisition and noise elimination using a comparator. The system is triggered by the average frequency response of objects hitting the platform, with subsequent processing controlled by an Arduino [4].

In their article titled "Automatic waste sorting based on image processing," Mohini Ghuge and Dr. S. N. Bhadoria proposed a solution that effectively sorts waste into three containers, reducing power consumption by distinguishing between different waste types. They used neural network training, achieving a 95% accuracy during the training phase and a 92% accuracy during testing, with specific detection rates of 93% for paper, 92% for plastic, and 93% for metal. However, the study suggests the need for further research in module interfacing and more in-depth exploration of the conveyor system's mechanical design to enhance efficiency and functionality. [5].

The article "Intelligent waste management system using deep learning with IoT" presents a comprehensive waste management system that combines deep learning and Internet of Things (IoT) technologies. The authors introduce a well-structured architecture that employs a Convolutional Neural Network (CNN) for waste classification, a smart trash bin with multiple sensors for real-time monitoring, and connectivity via IoT and Bluetooth for data management. This innovative

system aims to enhance the efficiency of waste management by achieving a classification accuracy of 95.3125% and a System Usability Scale (SUS) score of 86%. It also acknowledges the limitations of the proposed model, such as its restricted waste categories, sensor count, and challenges related to detecting specific waste conditions [6].

### III. EXISTING WASTE MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS

TABLE I  
LIMITATIONS OF EXISTING SYSTEMS

Existing Systems	Limitation
Manual waste segregation and management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Manual sorting can lead to errors and contamination of recyclables.</li> <li>Inadequate recycling leads to increased landfill waste and pollution.</li> <li>Higher operational costs.</li> <li>Inefficient systems contribute to resource depletion and pollution.</li> </ul>
Waste Management System Using Deep Learning with IoT [6]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The system relies on conveyor belts, which is inherently slow. This may lead to bottlenecks or delays in the waste sorting process.</li> <li>The absence of gas sensors in the system is a limitation. Gas sensing capabilities would be valuable for detecting and monitoring potentially hazardous or noxious gasses emitted from certain types of waste, enhancing safety and environmental monitoring.</li> </ul>
Smart Waste Segregation and Monitoring System using IoT [7]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No computer Vision</li> <li>Technical Complexity: The system relies on various sensors and automation technology to function effectively. This complexity can lead to technical issues, breakdowns, or malfunctions, requiring specialized skills and resources for maintenance and repair.</li> <li>The system categorizes waste into three main types (wet, dry, and metallic), but waste composition can be highly variable. It may struggle to accurately segregate waste that doesn't fit neatly into these categories, potentially leading to errors in segregation.</li> </ul>
IoT-based Waste Management [2]	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The system primarily focuses on monitoring the fill levels of trash bins to ensure timely collection and maintenance.</li> <li>This system relies on the internet and the Blynk app for real-time monitoring and notifications. While this is effective in urban areas with stable connectivity, it may not be suitable for regions with poor or unreliable internet access. In such areas, the system's functionality may be compromised.</li> </ul>

### IV. PROPOSED SYSTEM

The WasteWise system is a pioneering solution that redefines waste management by leveraging cutting-edge technologies to improve precision and sustainability. The system overcomes the limitations of the existing systems which is described in the table I. At its core, this innovative system

utilizes computer vision, enabling the precise categorization of waste materials with unprecedented accuracy [12]. By employing this advanced technology, the system can distinguish between various types of waste, such as plastic, glass, metal, and bio, streamlining the waste sorting process and promoting more efficient recycling practices. The waste can be generally classified into two different sections: biodegradable and nonbiodegradable [9].

To further enhance efficiency, WasteWise incorporates proximity sensors. These sensors monitor the fill levels of waste containers in real-time, allowing waste management teams to prioritize collections based on need. This not only reduces unnecessary pickups but also minimizes environmental impact by reducing fuel consumption and emissions, resulting in a more eco-friendly and cost-effective waste management process. Real-time data analytic play a pivotal role in the WasteWise system, empowering waste management authorities with crucial insights for informed decision-making. By providing real-time alerts and notifications to relevant stakeholders, the system ensures timely response to urgent issues, such as overflowing bins, and fosters transparency in the waste management process.

#### A. Proposed Architecture

The figure 1 below illustrates the step wise operation of the entire system.

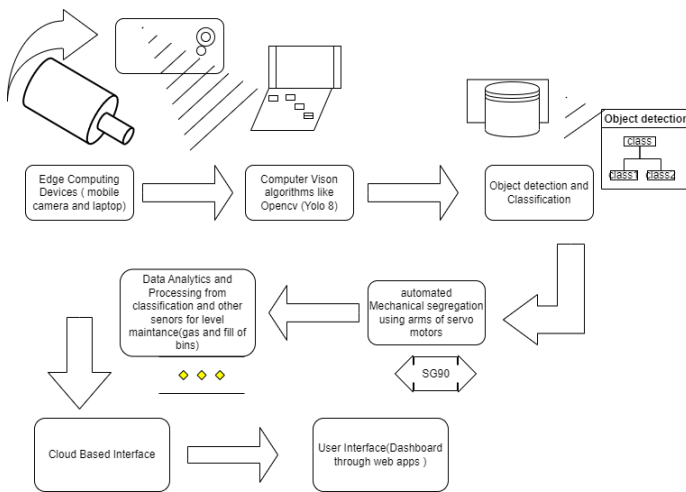


Fig. 1. WasteWise system's solution architecture.png

##### 1) Hardware Components:

- **Cameras:** Camera modules equipped with computer vision capabilities for waste item detection and classification.
- **Proximity Distance sensors:** Proximity sensors are deployed on waste collection bins. These sensors monitor the proximity of waste bins and optimize collection schedules.
- **Gas sensors (MQ-9B)** to measure toxicity in biodegradable wastes.

- **Edge Computing Devices:** Computers for local processing and micro controllers like ESP32 for control of sensors. Mobile IP camera as camera interface and managing data transmission.
- **Cloud-Based Analytics Platform:** A cloud-based platform for storing and processing real-time data.
- **User Interface:** A dynamic dashboard accessible through web. Provides waste management authorities with real-time information and actionable insights.

##### 2) Software Components:

- Firmware for microcontrollers to interface with sensors and cameras.
- Computer vision software for waste item detection and classification.
- Real-time data processing and analytics software.
- Dashboard development tools for creating the user interface.
- Web applications for accessing the dashboard and receiving notifications.

#### B. Methodology

The methodology for the WasteWise System combines hardware selection, Embedded C programming, computer vision, actuator implementation, waste level monitoring, and data visualization to create an efficient, user-friendly system that facilitates effective waste management and resource optimization.

i) The white led and the ip camera is pointed in the way directing towards the entry of the garbage which is collected on a sliding door; As we are using a Object Detection Model to process the video stream is live and detecting. The IP camera (mobile camera) will then take a picture, which is then fed through the trained model, outputting a picture with all the objects classified. Depending on the type of garbage, the trap door will open, dropping the garbage into the U bent, and the bent will move to the appropriate sorting bin.

ii) Image Preparation is done using Roboflow, an online self-served annotation tool. All the images are first manually taken with the machine-fixed camera, then labeled each image manually according to their classes. Afterwards, the images are split into a dataset of appropriate ratio of training and testing (details in 2.3.4). Lastly, argumentations are applied to all the images in the dataset. (Mobile camera: exposure:0, pixel resolution of 640\*480) .The dataset is now ready to be exported for machine learning model training. The sorting machine inbox is a controlled environment, the background of the images does not change from image to image. The model will process the video stream. Workflow of image preparation is represented in figure 2.

iii) The deployment phase of this project involves the utilization of Python as the primary programming language. This deployment makes use of several essential Python packages, including;

**ESP32.GPIO:** This package is employed for the purpose of controlling the GPIO (General-Purpose Input/Output) pins

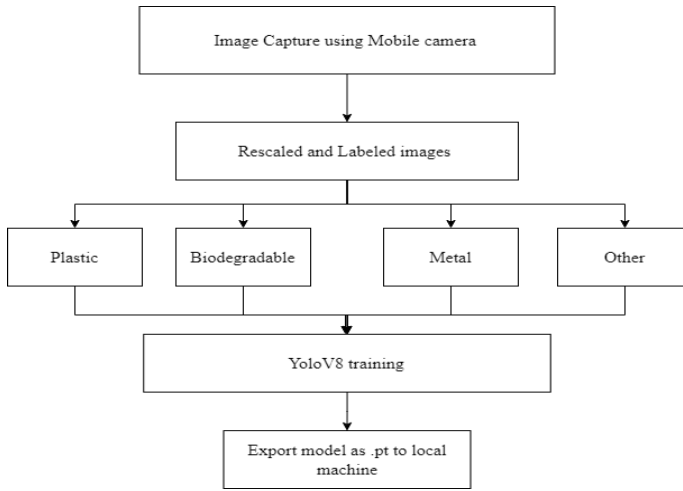


Fig. 2. Flowchart of object detection preparation

on the ESP32, enabling interaction with external hardware components.

**PyTorch:** PyTorch is a widely-used framework, employed to access and utilize the YOLOv8 model. This deep learning framework allows for object detection and other machine learning tasks.

**OpenCV-Python:** OpenCV-Python is a package that plays a crucial role in running an instance of the camera. It is commonly used for computer vision and image processing applications.

**YAML:** YAML is a file format used for configuration purposes. In this deployment, it is employed to read and write .yaml files, which help in configuring and customizing the system.

iv) We utilized YOLOv8, a PyTorch-based computer vision model known for its unified approach to object detection, combining object classification and bounding box prediction. We assessed the impact of model complexity, particularly YOLOv8 in large size, by varying the number of training epochs and adjusting the train-test data split ratio. The dataset consisted of 7845 training images, 411 testing images, and 809 validation images, distributed at 86.58% for training, 4.54% for testing, and 8.92% for validation. We employed sub-classes for image labeling but grouped them under the main classes 'bio,' 'glass,' 'plastic,' and 'metal' when exporting the dataset. Key modifications to model training parameters included an image resolution of 608x800 pixels, a batch size of 32, and exploration of training epochs from 25 to the maximum, while maintaining default values for other parameters from the YOLOv8 publisher, Ultralytics.

v) The results obtained from image processing are sent to the ESP32 via the HTTP protocol using both GET and PUT commands. This communication allows the stepper motor to be directed to the appropriate bin for disposal.

vi) The system is primarily powered by the ESP32 microcontroller, chosen for its versatility and compatibility with various sensors and communication protocols. To program

the microcontroller and connected components, the Arduino IDE is employed, with the code written in the Embedded C language. Servo Motor and stepper motor are used as actuators to segregate waste items effectively, ensuring that each type of waste is directed to the appropriate bin.

vii) To monitor the fill level of each waste bin, an Ultrasonic sensor is strategically placed at the edge of each container. When a bin reaches its full capacity, a LED blinks in particular bin and the sensor triggers a 'Bin is Full' message which is then transmitted to the cleaning authorities. This proactive alert system ensures timely waste disposal and the optimal use of resources.

viii) The project incorporates the development of a dynamic dashboard accessible through web application. This dashboard provides real-time information on the status of each bin, offering waste management authorities valuable insights for decision-making. It allows them to monitor the system's performance, review historical data, and make informed choices regarding waste collection and recycling operations.

### C. Advantages and Disadvantages of the Proposed System

The Automatic Waste Segregator System offers a promising solution to modern waste management challenges, harnessing technology to enhance efficiency and sustainability. However, like any innovation, it comes with its set of advantages and disadvantages that warrant careful consideration.

#### 1) Advantages:

- **Efficient Waste Segregation:** The system employs computer vision, stepper motors and servo motors to accurately segregate different types of waste, promoting efficient recycling practices.
- **Real-Time Monitoring:** Ultrasonic sensors and a dynamic dashboard provide real-time monitoring of waste bin fill levels, enabling timely waste collection and minimizing overflowing bins, which can lead to environmental and health hazards.
- **Environmental Benefits:** Improved waste segregation and reduced waste overflow contribute to a cleaner environment and promote sustainable waste management practices.
- **Data-Driven Decision-Making:** The system generates actionable insights through data analytics, aiding waste management authorities in making informed decisions regarding resource allocation, service improvement, and future planning.
- **Proactive Alerts:** The 'Bin is Full' alerts sent to cleaning authorities ensure a timely response to waste collection needs, enhancing the overall efficiency of waste management.

#### 2) Disadvantages:

- **Maintenance and Upkeep:** Like any technology, the system requires regular maintenance and occasional upgrades to ensure consistent and accurate operation.
- **Technical Expertise:** The operation and maintenance of the system require a level of technical expertise.

- **Dependency on Technology:** The system is reliant on sensors and technology, making it susceptible to potential technical failures and have certain drawbacks in terms of boxing the frame (label frames).
- **Limited Compatibility:** The system's compatibility may be limited to areas with internet connectivity and may not be feasible in remote or underserved locations without reliable network access.

## V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

### A. Neural Network Layers

Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) are widely used for image and object detection tasks. They serve as a fundamental layer in various models, such as Conv2D for 2D images, making them a cornerstone in computer vision research [13]. The provided table (Fig 3) represents a configuration of layers used in a neural network model. These layers are employed in the network architecture to extract features, perform transformations, and execute object detection tasks [14].

S/N	from	n	params	module	arguments
0	-1	1	928	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[3, 32, 3, 2]
1	-1	1	18560	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[32, 64, 3, 2]
2	-1	1	29056	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[64, 64, 1, True]
3	-1	1	73984	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[64, 128, 3, 2]
4	-1	2	197632	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[128, 128, 2, True]
5	-1	1	295424	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[128, 256, 3, 2]
6	-1	2	788480	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[256, 256, 2, True]
7	-1	1	1180672	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[256, 512, 3, 2]
8	-1	1	1838880	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[512, 512, 1, True]
9	-1	1	656896	ultralytics.nn.modules.SPPF	[512, 512, 5]
10	-1	1	0	torch.nn.modules.upsampling.Upsample	[None, 2, 'nearest']
11	[-1, 6]	1	0	ultralytics.nn.modules.Concat	[1]
12	-1	1	591360	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[768, 256, 1]
13	-1	1	0	torch.nn.modules.upsampling.Upsample	[None, 2, 'nearest']
14	[-1, 4]	1	0	ultralytics.nn.modules.Concat	[1]
15	-1	1	148224	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[384, 128, 1]
16	-1	1	147712	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[128, 128, 3, 2]
17	[-1, 12]	1	0	ultralytics.nn.modules.Concat	[1]
18	-1	1	493056	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[384, 256, 1]
19	-1	1	590336	ultralytics.nn.modules.Conv	[256, 256, 3, 2]
20	[-1, 9]	1	0	ultralytics.nn.modules.Concat	[1]
21	-1	1	1969152	ultralytics.nn.modules.C2f	[768, 512, 1]
22	[15, 18, 21]	1	2117596	ultralytics.nn.modules.Detect	[4, [128, 256, 512]]

Model summary: 225 layers, 11137148 parameters, 11137132 gradients, 28.7 GFLOPs

Fig. 3. Neural Network layers

The described neural network architecture is primarily designed for object detection and similar computer vision tasks. It includes convolutional layers for feature extraction, with parameters specifying input and output channels, kernel size, and stride. Feature transformation layers (C2f) and spatial pyramid pooling (SPPF) layers enhance feature processing. Upsampling layers expand spatial dimensions, while concatenation layers fuse feature maps from different levels. The architecture concludes with a detection layer (Detect) for generating predictions, indicating anchor boxes and feature map scales for object detection. The argument [4, [128, 256, 512]] denotes the number of anchor boxes and their associated scales. This comprehensive approach combines convolution, transformation, pooling, and detection for effective feature extraction and object detection.

The output  $Y$  of a convolutional layer can be calculated using the convolution operation:

$$Y = f \left( \sum_{i,j} X[i,j] \times W[i,j] + b \right) \quad (1)$$

where:

- $X$  is the input feature map.
- $W$  is the learnable filter (kernel) applied to the input.
- $b$  is the bias term.
- $f$  represents the activation function (e.g., ReLU).

### B. Confusion Matrix

Each row in the confusion matrix corresponds to the actual classes, and each column corresponds to the predicted classes. The values in the matrix represent the proportion or count of instances that fall into each category. Here is the interpretation based on the given confusion matrix in figure 4.

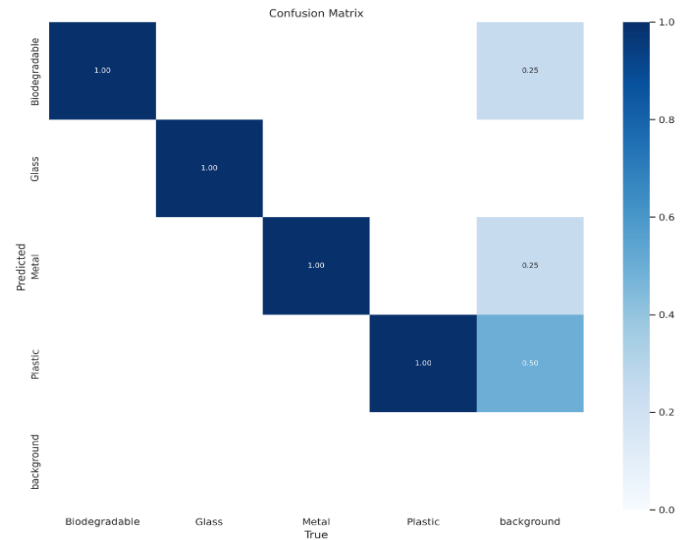


Fig. 4. Confusion Matrix of a YOLOv8 large model with 25 epochs

- **Biodegradable:** The model has correctly classified all instances (100%) that belong to the 'Biodegradable' category. However, there seems to be some confusion with Background, where 25% of 'Background' items are misclassified as 'Biodegradable'.
- **Glass:** The model correctly identifies all instances (100%) belonging to the 'Glass' category. It does not seem to confuse any other class with 'Glass'.
- **Metal:** Similar to 'Biodegradable', the model correctly identifies all instances (100%) that belong to the 'Metal' category. However, like in the case of 'Biodegradable', it misclassified 25% of 'Background' items as 'Metal'.
- **Plastic:** The model correctly classifies all instances (100%) that belong to the "Plastic" category. Additionally, it misclassified 50% of 'Background' items as 'Plastic'.
- **Background:** The model doesn't seem to correctly identify any instances as 'Background.' It appears to mistake some instances of other categories as 'Background'.



### C. Visual Presentation of Model Result

Figure 5 illustrates the performance of a model in an object detection task after 25 training epochs. The model achieved low losses during training, with box regression at 0.20, classification at 0.15, and dense feature learning at 0.4. For class 'B,' it exhibited high precision (0.977) and recall (0.967). However, the validation set showed slightly higher losses, especially in box regression (0.33) and dense feature learning (0.79), suggesting potential overfitting. Nevertheless,

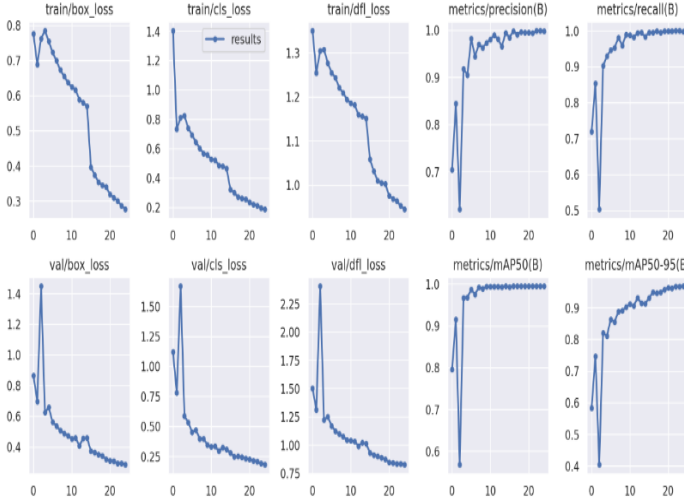


Fig. 5. Model Result

the validation classification loss was at 0.22, indicating better generalization. The model maintained a high mean average precision of 0.96 at an IoU threshold of 0.50 and an mAP of 0.92 across a broader IoU range (0.50 to 0.95) for class B, highlighting a strong balance between precision and recall. To enhance generalization, addressing overfitting in bounding box regression and dense feature learning is advisable.

TABLE II  
MODEL EVALUATION

Evaluation Indicator	Model
metrics/precision (B)%	97.7
metrics/recall(B)%	96.7
metrics/mAP50(B)%	96
metrics/mAP50-95(B)%	92

The provided metrics which is described in the table II evaluate the model's performance in classification or object detection. A precision metric (B) of 0.977 at 25 epochs signifies the model's accuracy in correctly identifying class B instances, emphasizing low false positives. The recall (B) value of 0.967 indicates the model's ability to capture most actual class B instances, emphasizing low false negatives. The mean average precision at an IoU threshold of 0.50 (mAP50) is 0.96, demonstrating a balanced precision-recall trade-off at a specific IoU threshold. Additionally, mAP50-95, evaluated across IoU thresholds from 0.50 to 0.95, stands at 0.92, showing consistent object identification across various

levels of overlap. These metrics collectively highlight the model's accuracy in detecting and classifying class B objects, emphasizing both high precision and recall rates for robust and accurate performance.

### D. Experiment Effect

The test pictures of metal tins, glass bottles, metal joints, plastic bags are shown in figure 6. As shown in the figure it can be seen that Yolov8 can successfully classify and segregate waste based on the labels.

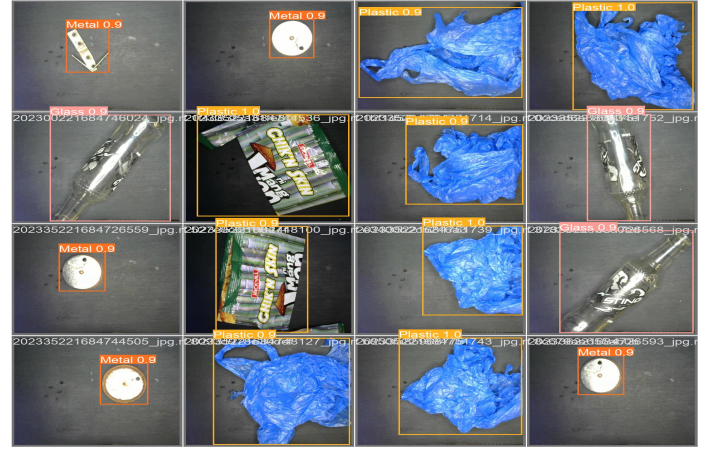


Fig. 6. All kinds of garbage in real scene

## VI. CONCLUSION

In this project, we present a Smart Waste Segregation system employing IoT technology. The YOLOv8 object detection model, trained to recognize distinct waste types—plastic, biodegradable, metal, and glass—demonstrates notable precision, achieving a precision of 0.977 and a recall of 0.967 for class B. The model's high accuracy in waste classification forms the core of an efficient waste management system. The wireless communication infrastructure facilitates the transmission of detection results to an ESP32 device, which orchestrates servo-controlled partitions, directing waste to designated bins. Ultrasound sensors, integrated into the bins, provide real-time feedback on waste levels, ensuring timely waste disposal and preventing overfilling. Moreover, the specialized biodegradable bin section, equipped with CH4 and CO gas sensors, monitors gas emissions, crucial in organic waste management. This innovative system encompasses an amalgamation of IoT, machine learning, and environmental sensing technologies, offering real-time waste sorting and monitoring. By incorporating trend analysis of bin fill levels and gas emissions, the system enables informed decision-making in waste management processes. The research findings highlight the system's efficacy in promoting sustainable waste segregation practices, contributing to environmental conservation and fostering data-driven insights for waste management strategies.

# AUTHORS AND AFFILIATIONS

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# ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The authors would like to acknowledge the support of CHRIST (Deemed to be University) in this research. We would also like to thank Associate Professor Dr. Deepa V Jose for her guidance and valuable feedback throughout the research process.

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