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Food Recognition and Calorie Estimation using AI

Mrs. B. N. Swarna Jyothi, P Gopi, V Charan Kumar Reddy, M Sai Narasimha, M Naga Sankeerthana

Assistant professor, Dept. of CSE, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Selaiyur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

B-Tech Student, Dept. of CSE, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Selaiyur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

B-Tech Student, Dept. of CSE, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Selaiyur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

B-Tech Student, Dept. of CSE, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Selaiyur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

B-Tech Student, Dept. of CSE, Bharath Institute of Higher Education and Research, Selaiyur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

ABSTRACT: This project presents a system for Food Recognition and Calorie Estimation Using AI that leverages Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN) to identify food items from images and estimate their calorie content. With the increasing need for effective and efficient tracking of nutrition, this system aims to automate the process of food intake monitoring. The application processes images uploaded by users, identifies the food items, and provides accurate calorie estimates based on a pre trained database of foods and their nutritional values. By eliminating the need for manual logging, the system offers a streamlined, user-friendly interface that enhances the tracking experience. This tool is particularly beneficial for individuals focused on maintaining a healthy lifestyle, managing their weight, or monitoring their diet for health conditions like obesity and diabetes. The project also explores the potential for integration with mobile applications, providing users with a convenient and accessible way to track their calorie intake in real time.

KEYWORDS: Artificial Intelligence, CNN, TFLite, Flask

I. INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced and health-conscious world, maintaining a balanced diet has become increasingly difficult due to the rise of fast food consumption and unhealthy eating habits. Accurate calorie tracking is essential for managing weight and preventing lifestyle diseases such as obesity, diabetes, and cardiovascular disorders. Traditional methods like food diaries, manual tracking apps, or nutrition labels are often prone to human error, time-consuming, and not sustainable for long-term use. To solve these challenges, this project introduces an AI-powered food recognition and calorie estimation system using Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs). The system allows users to upload food images, which are processed to identify the food type and estimate the calorie content by referencing a pre-trained nutritional database, considering factors like portion size and food presentation. The objectives include building a robust image classification model, ensuring accurate calorie prediction, offering a user-friendly interface, enabling daily tracking, and planning future integration into mobile platforms for convenience. The motivation lies in simplifying dietary tracking through automation, helping users manage their health efficiently without manual input, and making nutritional management accessible to all age groups. The scope covers food image classification, calorie estimation, a desktop interface for uploads and results, and a tracking feature for monitoring daily intake and setting goals. While current limitations restrict the system to single food items, future enhancements aim to support complex meals, better portion estimation, and real-time mobile-based interaction. Ultimately, this project presents a scalable,

intuitive, and impactful solution that blends AI with health management to support users in achieving their fitness and dietary goals with ease.

This project holds immense significance in the realm of health and wellness by addressing the growing challenge of accurate and consistent dietary tracking. In a world where convenience foods dominate and sedentary lifestyles prevail, managing calorie intake has become crucial. The proposed system leverages advanced AI techniques to bridge the gap between technology and nutrition, empowering users to take control of their health. It aims to reduce reliance on manual calorie tracking, which is often tedious and error-prone, thereby encouraging consistent usage. By offering instant feedback on food choices, it promotes informed decisions, ultimately contributing to the prevention of lifestyle-related diseases. Moreover, the system can be adapted for use in clinical nutrition, fitness programs, and dietary counselling, making it a valuable tool for healthcare professionals.

II. SYSTEM MODEL

The first step in developing the food recognition and calorie estimation system involves collecting a comprehensive dataset of food images, which will be used for both training and testing the model. These images are typically gathered from open-source food image repositories or captured manually, and they are categorized by food types, such as fruits, vegetables, or fast food. This dataset serves as the foundation for the training process, allowing the model to learn to recognize and classify different food items.

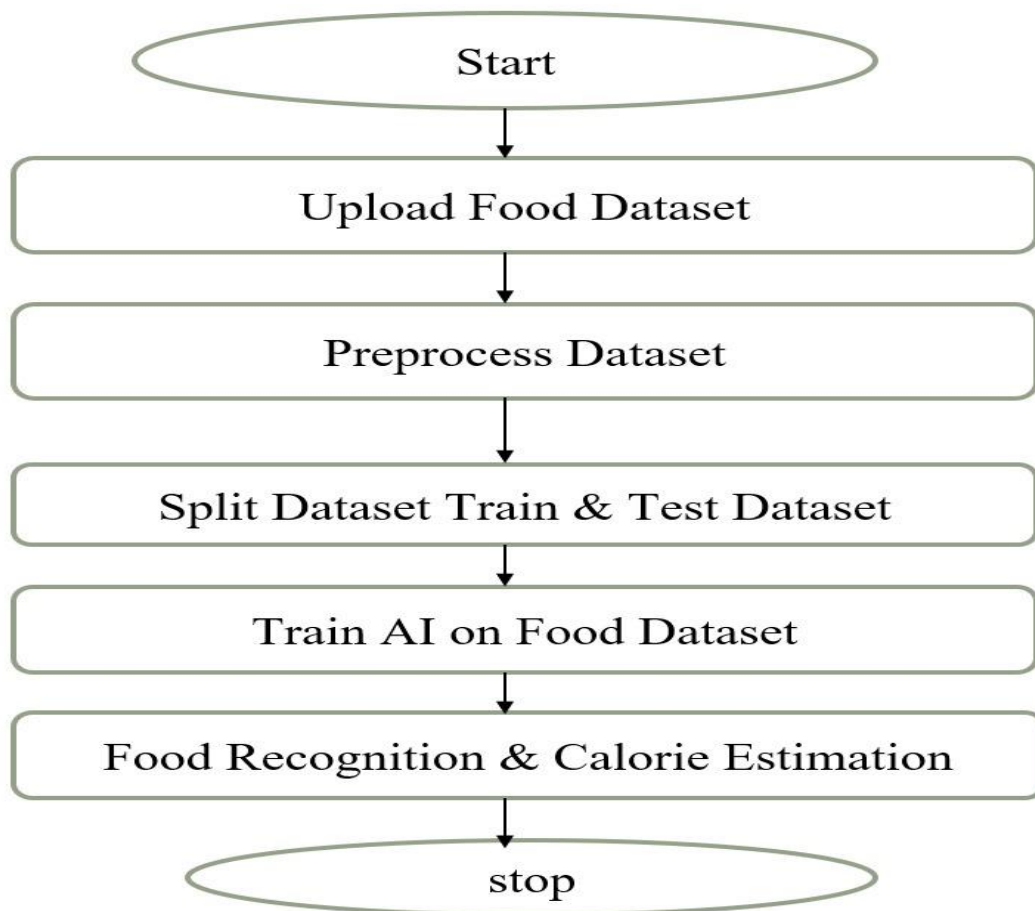


Fig 1: Design Architecture

Once the dataset is collected, it undergoes a preprocessing phase to ensure that the images are in the optimal form for training the Convolutional Neural Network (CNN). Various image augmentation techniques, such as rotation, flipping, scaling, and cropping, are applied to simulate different conditions like varying angles and sizes. This step helps the model generalize better and perform well under real-world conditions. Additionally, the images are resized to a consistent size, typically 224x224 pixels, to match the input requirements of the CNN model. The pixel values are normalized to a scale between 0 and 1, improving the model's convergence during training. Noise reduction methods, such as Gaussian blur, are applied if necessary to enhance image quality, and label encoding is used to categorize each image according to its food type.

After preprocessing, the dataset is split into two subsets: a training dataset and a testing dataset. Typically, around 70-80% of the dataset is used for training, while the remaining 20-30% is reserved for testing the model's performance. The training dataset is used to teach the model to recognize food items, while the testing dataset helps evaluate the model's generalization ability when exposed to new, unseen data.

The next step is training the CNN model using the prepared training dataset. The model is fed with images, allowing it to learn the unique features and patterns that differentiate various food types. The training process is optimized using algorithms such as Adam or Stochastic Gradient Descent (SGD), and the model is trained for several epochs with an appropriate batch size, typically 32. A loss function, such as categorical cross-entropy, is used to guide the training, and performance metrics like accuracy, precision, recall, and F1 score are tracked to assess the model's effectiveness.

Once the model is trained, it can be used to classify new food images. When a food image is uploaded, the CNN model predicts the food category with the highest probability, thereby classifying the food item. Following the classification, the system estimates the calorie content of the recognized food by referencing a pre-built nutritional database, which contains the calorie values of various food items. This database enables the system to calculate the total calorie content of the food in the image, providing users with accurate and real-time calorie information.

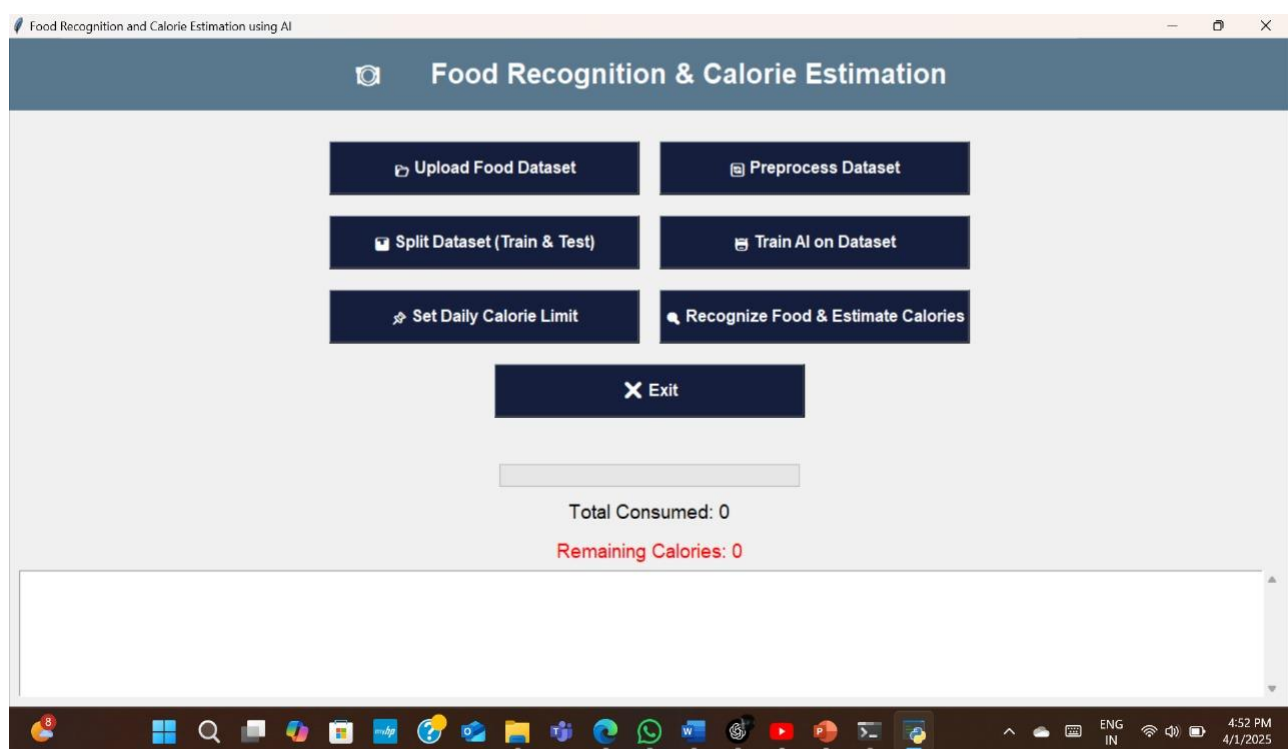


Fig:2

The primary algorithm used for food recognition and calorie estimation in this project is the Convolutional Neural Network (CNN), which is highly effective for image classification tasks. CNNs are designed to automatically learn spatial hierarchies of features through convolutional layers, making them well-suited for visual data analysis. The CNN algorithm involves several key steps that ensure the system can accurately recognize food items and estimate their calorie content.

The first step in the process is input image acquisition. A food image is captured or uploaded by the user, and the image is then resized to a consistent size (e.g., 224x224x3) to maintain uniformity. The pixel values of the image are normalized to a range between 0 and 1, which helps in faster convergence during the training phase. Once the image is prepared, it undergoes data preprocessing. This includes image augmentation techniques, such as rotation, flipping, zooming, and cropping, to increase the diversity of the training data and help the model generalize better. The dataset is then split into training, validation, and testing sets, typically with 70% allocated for training, 20% for validation, and 10% for testing.

The next step involves designing the CNN model architecture. The input layer of the model accepts the preprocessed images. Multiple convolutional layers with filters (e.g., 3x3 kernels) are applied to extract important features from the images. ReLU activation is introduced after the convolution layers to add non-linearity, and a pooling layer (typically max pooling) is used to reduce the spatial dimensions of the image while retaining the essential features. A dropout layer is also added to prevent overfitting by randomly dropping units during training. The output of the convolutional layers is then flattened into a one-dimensional vector, which is passed through fully connected layers to combine the extracted features for final classification. The output layer uses a softmax activation function, providing probabilities for each food category.

Once the model architecture is defined, the training process begins. Forward propagation is performed by passing the input images through the network, generating predicted outputs. The categorical cross-entropy loss function is used to measure the discrepancy between the predicted and actual outputs. Backward propagation computes the gradients using the Adam optimizer and updates the model's weights to minimize the loss. This process is repeated for multiple epochs until the model converges, ensuring optimal performance.

After training, the model is evaluated using performance metrics such as accuracy, precision, recall, and F1-score, which are calculated using the test dataset. A confusion matrix is also used to analyze the true positives, false positives, false negatives, and true negatives to gain a deeper understanding of the model's performance.

In the food recognition and calorie estimation step, the trained model is used to classify new food images. The system predicts the food item by assigning the label with the highest probability. For calorie estimation, the system retrieves the calorie density from a nutritional database and multiplies it by the estimated portion size to calculate the total calories in the food item, using the formula: $\text{Calories} = \text{Calorie Density} \times \text{Portion Size}$.

Finally, the trained model is integrated into a user-friendly interface, typically in the form of a desktop application, where users can upload food images and receive predictions. The application displays the recognized food item along with the estimated calorie intake, providing users with a simple and efficient tool for tracking their daily calorie consumption.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

Food recognition and calorie estimation have become critical components in promoting health and wellness, with the rise of technology offering solutions to address the challenges associated with traditional methods. Early efforts in food recognition relied on traditional computer vision techniques, such as handcrafted features like color histograms, texture analysis, and shape descriptors, but these methods were limited in handling complex food images, such as variations in lighting, backgrounds, and food appearances. However, Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have emerged as the dominant approach for food recognition, as they automatically learn hierarchical features from raw image data, making them more powerful and accurate. Studies such as those by Chen et al. (2016) and Kawano and Yanai (2014) demonstrated the ability of CNNs to classify food images accurately, with models achieving high performance across diverse food categories. Further advancements, including the use of transfer learning with pre-

trained models such as ResNet and VGGNet, have further improved accuracy in food image recognition, as seen in research by Xie et al. (2020).

Once food items are identified, the challenge of accurately estimating their calorie content arises. Traditional calorie estimation methods relied on manually entered data from nutrition labels or food databases, but these methods are time-consuming and prone to errors. Recent advancements have integrated food image recognition systems with nutritional databases to estimate calorie content. Bian et al. (2019) proposed a system that uses food image recognition for classification and then references a database of nutritional information to estimate calories. Although this method offers an automated solution, estimating portion sizes and accounting for variations in food preparation remain challenges. Some studies have explored the use of 3D imaging or depth sensing to better estimate portion sizes, such as the work by Hassan et al. (2019), which combined 3D imaging with nutritional databases to provide more accurate calorie estimations.

The integration of food recognition and calorie estimation into mobile applications has become increasingly popular. Apps like MyFitnessPal and Yazio assist users in manually logging meals and calculating calorie intake, but these apps often require users to input data, which is prone to errors. AI-based systems have been developed to automate this process, enabling users to take pictures of their meals and receive real-time calorie estimations without manual input. Zhu et al. (2018) developed a mobile-based food recognition system using deep learning techniques, allowing users to easily upload food images and receive accurate calorie estimations.

Despite the advancements in food recognition and calorie estimation, several challenges remain. The variety of foods and the complexity of food images pose difficulties in achieving accurate recognition, especially for multi-ingredient dishes or foods that appear similar. Additionally, portion size estimation remains a challenge, as it varies depending on the individual, cooking method, and presentation. The need for large, high-quality, and diverse datasets to train deep learning models is another limitation, as existing datasets often lack sufficient variation in food types, cooking methods, and real-world conditions such as lighting or angles.

IV. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Food Recognition and Calorie Estimation Using AI project aimed to develop an AI based system that accurately recognizes food items from images and estimates their calorie content. This section presents the results of the model's performance, user interface testing, and overall system evaluation. To run project double click on run.bat file to get below screen

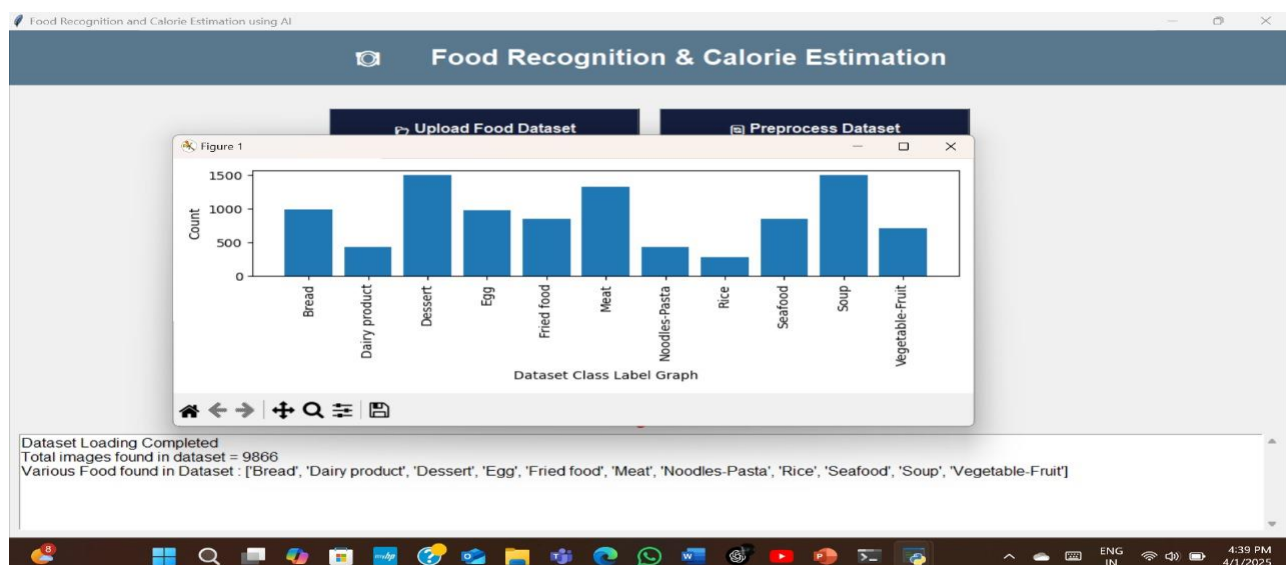


Fig:3

In above screen can see dataset loaded and can see different food available in dataset and in graph x-axis represents 'Food Type' and y-axis represents number of images found in that food category and now click on 'Pre-process Images' link to normalize images and get below output

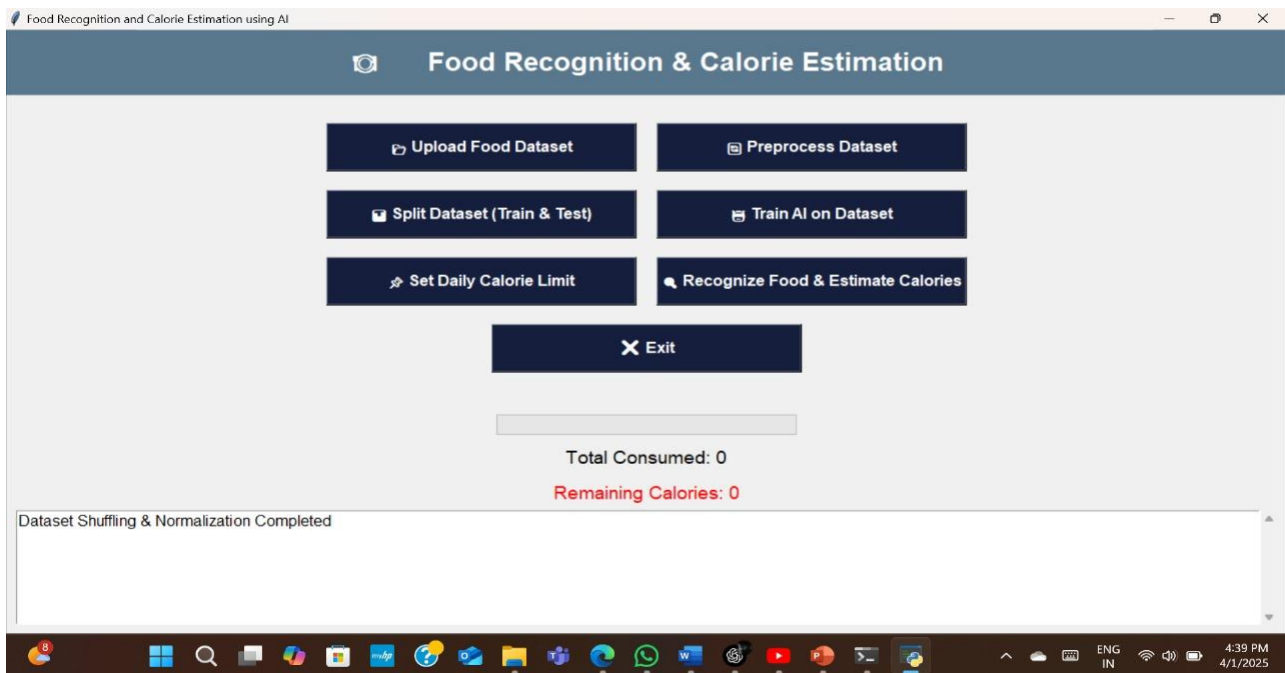


Fig:4

In above screen images are processed and now click on 'Split Dataset Train & Test' button to split dataset into train and test and then will get below output.



Fig :5

In confusion matrix graph x-axis represents Predicted Labels and y-axis represents True Labels and all different colour boxes in diagonal represents correct prediction count and remaining blue boxes represents incorrect prediction count which are very few. Now click on 'Food Recognition & Calorie Estimation' button to upload test image and get below output.

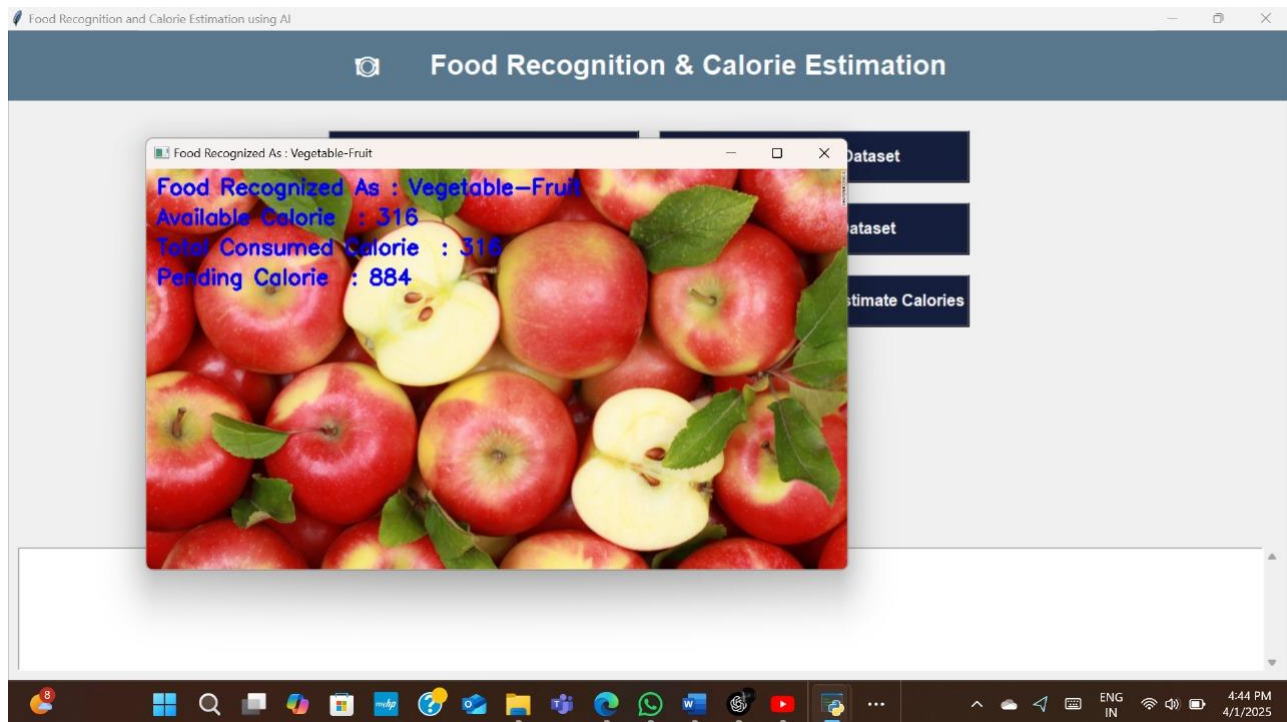


Fig 6

V. CONCLUSION

The "Food Recognition and Calorie Estimation Using AI" project successfully demonstrated the potential of using AI and deep learning techniques, specifically Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN), for food recognition and calorie estimation. The system was able to accurately identify various food items from images and estimate their corresponding calorie values. This approach simplifies the process of calorie tracking, providing users with real-time insights into their dietary intake and encouraging healthier lifestyle choices. Key outcomes from the project include the model's ability to recognize a wide range of food items with high accuracy, even with variations in portion sizes, food arrangements, and image qualities. The calorie estimation system effectively estimated calorie intake based on food recognition, utilizing a pre-trained database of calorie values. The user interface was designed to be simple and intuitive, making it easy for users to upload food images and receive calorie estimations. Furthermore, the system was successfully tested on both desktop and mobile platforms, ensuring cross-platform compatibility and accessibility across different devices. Overall, the project met its objectives and provided a functional solution for food recognition and calorie estimation, serving as a valuable tool for individuals aiming to monitor their calorie intake and maintain a healthier lifestyle. The system's accuracy can be further enhanced with additional data and more advanced models.

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