

# Advanced algorithm for fault detection and localization in DC microgrids utilizing capacitor current transient analysis for enhanced reliability in DER-integrated systems

Banothu Somanna\*  and Sushma Gupta 

Department of Electrical Engineering, Maulana Azad National Institute of Technology, Bhopal 462003, MP, India

Received: 16 April 2025 / Accepted: 10 February 2026

**Abstract.** This paper presents an advanced Short-Circuit (SC) fault detection and location methodology for DC Microgrids (DCMGs) integrating Distributed Energy Resources (DERs). Unisolated SC faults in DC systems present a significant challenge, leading to service disruptions and hindering effective fault detection. To address this, the proposed method capitalizes on the capacitor-dominated characteristics of DCMGs by utilizing capacitor current dynamics. A comprehensive DCMG system model is developed to facilitate the application and evaluation of the proposed scheme. The algorithm employs the average capacitor current and cable resistance to accurately determine the occurrence and location of faults within the DCMG network. Active DER sources (solar PV, wind, utility grid, and batteries) connect to loads *via* DC–DC converters, cables, relays, and circuit breakers. The method effectively detects the average capacitor current, enabling the identification of internal faults. Faults are classified as external if a set criterion is not met. Furthermore, the paper proposes a redundancy-based isolation configuration for zonal-type distributed networks. The efficacy of the methodology is rigorously validated through digital simulation studies. MATLAB/Simulink simulations of a DCMG, incorporating diverse generation sources and loads, are conducted under various fault scenarios. These include internal and external faults, as well as Line-to-Ground (LG) and Line-to-Line (LL) faults. The simulation results demonstrate the method's ability to accurately detect both Low-Impedance Faults (LIFs) and High-Impedance Faults (HIFs) and to locate the faulty cable. Notably, the approach achieves fault cable detection and isolation within 2.3 ms, confirming its effectiveness and speed.

**Keywords:** DC microgrid (DCMG), Capacitor current, Fault detection, Fault location, Low-impedance fault (LIF), High-impedance fault (HIF), Relay.

## 1 Introduction

Achieving integration of Distributed Energy Resources (DER) such as solar PhotoVoltaic (PV) systems, wind turbines, battery storage, and utility grids into DC Microgrids (DCMGs) has always remained a challenge. Modern methods usually involve reducing DER and using contemporary power electronic converters [1] to improve integration. These converters enable the coupling of DC power components [2]. A DCMG, or grid system that integrates DERs and loads, offers significant advantages over AC systems, making DER integration more feasible [3, 4]. However, DCMG faces practical implementation issues, such as protection schemes, bidirectional power-flow management, stability maintenance and control, dealing with low inertia, and accurate system modelling [5, 6].

The DCMG network protection requires unique strategies and faces complex security obstacles. Unlike AC systems, DC fault currents exhibit distinct characteristics that complicate protection. Rapidly rising fault currents, driven by DC bus capacitor discharge during short circuits, present a significant challenge [7, 8]. DC faults don't have zero crossings, which makes it more difficult for conventional breaker interruption. Therefore, specialized breakers and converter setups are often needed for effective fault clearing [9, 10]. Consequently, traditional AC protection methods are often unsuitable for DC systems [11–13]. The faults in microgrids can be broadly classified as AC-side faults, DC-side faults, and internal converter faults [14–16]. AC-side faults can arise from transmission or distribution line short circuits, AC-side converter failures, or conductor breaks [17]. The DC-side faults include short circuits like Line-to-Ground (LG) and Line-to-Line (LL) faults, as well as arc faults [18, 19]. The converter failures or malfunc-

\* Corresponding author: [203113016@stu.manit.ac.in](mailto:203113016@stu.manit.ac.in)

tions are categorized as internal converter faults [20]. Short-Circuit (SC) faults are particularly dangerous due to the low-resistance path they provide for high fault currents, necessitating rapid detection to prevent accidents [21, 22]. Various fault detection methods for DC systems have been proposed, utilizing techniques such as differential current, voltage sag analysis, and equivalent resistance calculation. Additionally, travelling wave analysis, Wavelet Transform (WT), and Artificial Neural Networks (ANNs) have also been employed [23, 24]. Although some methods provide faster identification speed, their practical implementation costs can be prohibitive [25, 26]. In addition to detection, accurate fault localization is crucial for restoring service after isolating the faulted section, minimizing power interruptions for end-users. Effective fault localization algorithms are thus necessary for rapid system recovery [27].

In [28, 29], several research articles have focused specifically on DCMG fault detection methods. In [30, 31], an iterative algorithm for fault detection in DCMG is presented. If there is a fault, the rate of the current rise in the DCMG is very high. It has a good ability to detect High-Impedance Faults (HIFs) and Low-Impedance Faults (LIFs), but it requires both voltage and current thresholds to detect these types of faults. However, overcurrent relays ( $R_S$ ) coordination is complicated due to the DCMG's low resistance and short cable length. Several fast protection methods for DCMGs have been developed. In [32], one approach uses the magnitude of the current difference in line segments for rapid fault detection. In [33–35], other methods identify faults based on the sign of estimated line parameters. In [36], a transient-based fault detection method has also been proposed, though it cannot differentiate between internal and external faults. In [37, 38], a discrete frame differential current method for PV-based multiterminal DCMG has also been explored. In [39], recognizing the challenges of overcurrent-based fault detection in DCMG. In [40, 41], a non-unit protection scheme using overcurrent and current/voltage change rate has been proposed. In [42, 43], research has also specifically addressed DCMG fault location. One technique involves connecting an external circuit at both ends of the line for DC fault location, but its accuracy is affected by fault resistance. As demonstrated, recent research has largely focused on either fault detection or fault location within DCMGs, highlighting the need for comprehensive solutions. Recently, [44] explored high-frequency signal injection for DC protection, enhancing detection speed, while [45] addressed energy storage-related protection under renewable fluctuations. Meanwhile, [46, 47] reviewed fault localization in distributed networks using probabilistic approaches, complementing existing deterministic schemes.

In [48], a high-speed current differential method was implemented in a smart DC distribution system, utilizing DC differential current characteristics for fault detection. This unit-based approach requires a substantial number of  $R_S$  (e.g., 10, as depicted in Fig. 1) for transmission line protection. In [49], resistance-based fault detection for localizing LIFs was proposed. In [50], a local resistance-based SC fault detection method for zonal DCMG was developed. However, a key limitation of the zonal approach is that a fault

near a load can result in the isolation of all loads. Furthermore, the increased number of  $R_S$  contributes to the system cost. In [51], combined fault detection and localization in DCMGs have been explored in a limited number of studies. In [52], one such approach uses a multi-criteria system for fault detection and a neural network for estimating fault distance. In [53], another method employs overcurrent protection for fault detection in DCMGs, using a probe power unit for fault location. In [54], a transient-based technique detects faults by comparing transient and steady-state currents, followed by fault location prediction *via* simulation analysis of sampled and estimated currents. However, the accuracy of both fault detection and localization in this method is susceptible to high-resistance faults. To address these challenges, [55] introduced an AI-based diagnostic tool leveraging energy conversion signatures, while [56] proposed a novel energy-aware adaptive protection system that reduces false tripping under variable DER conditions. These examples underscore the need for robust and cost-effective fault management strategies in DCMGs.

Short-time Fourier Transform (FT) and WT-based fault detection methods that rely on DC variations have been reported [57]. However, these methods are susceptible to high transmission resistance [58]. To address SC fault detection in capacitor-dominated grids, a novel scheme is proposed [59]. This article introduces a unit fault detection and localization algorithm for DCMG systems, aiming to overcome the limitations of existing techniques [60]. The algorithm estimates fault location online using voltage and current measurements at the cable segment ends to enhance robustness [61]. A calculated fault position less than 1 p.u indicates an internal fault, while a value greater than one indicates an external fault [62]. This proposed fault detection and localization technique offers several key contributions [63]. First, it achieves faster fault detection and location calculation compared to existing methods. It also demonstrates the ability to detect faults with up to 10  $\Omega$  of fault resistance. Second, the technique estimates fault location without requiring external circuitry. Finally, its performance is resilient to intermittent and variable output from DERs.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows. Section 2 describes the system configuration. Section 3 details the proposed algorithm and its flowchart. Section 4 presents simulation results and hardware validation. Section 5 concludes the article.

## 2 Fault description of the DCMG

The distributed generators (solar, wind, battery) and loads are associated with Voltage Source Converters (VSC) connected to the buses in the DCMG through a single Point of Common Coupling (PCC). Fault detection methods designed for interconnected AC grids [64] may not be directly applicable for verifying SC fault protection effectiveness in DCMGs. A simplified system representation is shown in Figure 1, with bus DCMG parameters detailed in Table 1. The cables are connected between various DERs and loads at the DCMG buses. The utility grid is connected

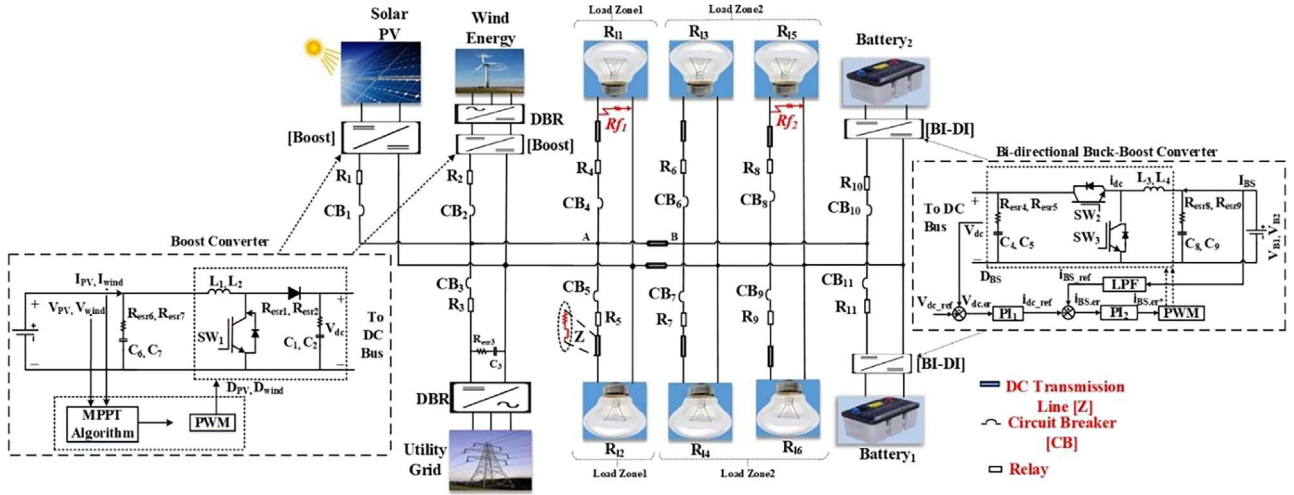


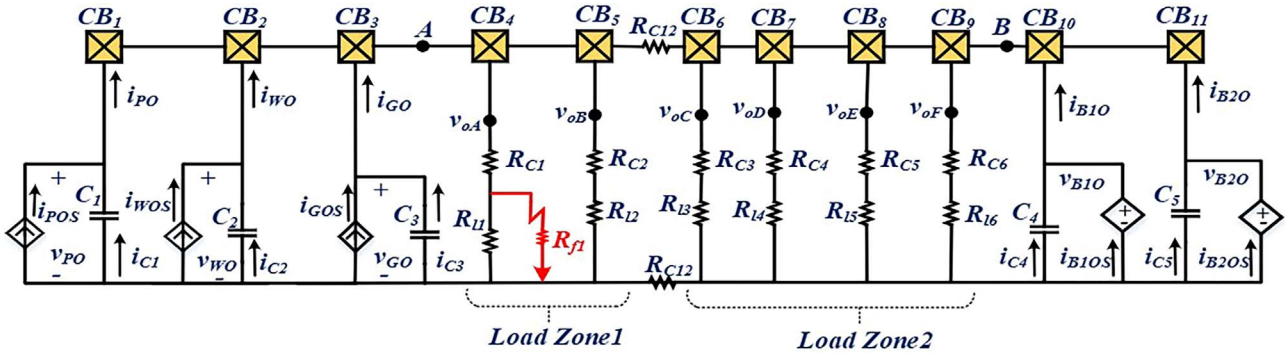
Fig. 1. Schematic diagram of a DC microgrid along with different types of DERs and loads.

Table 1. Components and parameters of the DC microgrid.

Symbol	Quantity	Value
<i>DC-DC converter</i>		
$L_1$ to $L_4$	Inductors	7.14 mH
$C_1$ to $C_9$	Capacitors	473.4693 $\mu$ F
$R_{esr1}$ – $R_{esr9}$	ESR of a capacitor	0.036 $\Omega$
$D_1$ to $D_6$	Diodes	
$Q_1$ to $Q_6$	IGBTs	
$R_{L1}$ to $R_{L6}$	Resistance of the loads	25 $\Omega$
$R_{f1}$ , $R_{f2}$	Range of fault resistance	0.5–10 $\Omega$
	DC-link operating voltage	90 V
	PV and wind of the DC-DC converter	2.32 kW
	Grid VSC	2.43 kW
	Bat <sub>1</sub> converter	253 W
	Bat <sub>2</sub> converter	249 W
	Switching frequency	5 kHz
<i>Battery parameters</i>		
	Battery voltage/Capacity	48 V/35 Ah
<i>PV Parameters</i>		
$V_{mp}$ (PV), $I_{mp}$ (PV)	Voltage at MPP, Current at MPP	67 V, 19.22 A
$V_{oc}$ (PV), $I_{sc}$ (PV)	Voltage at OC, Current at SC	90 V, 25.76 A
<i>Wind Parameters</i>		
$V_{mp(wind)}$ , $I_{mp(wind)}$	Voltage at MPP, Current at MPP	67.20 V, 19.5 A
$V_{oc(wind)}$ , $I_{sc(wind)}$	Voltage at OC, Current at SC	89.61 V, 26 A
<i>Cable parameters</i>		
$R_{C1-6}$ , $R_{C12}$	Cable (line) resistances (R)	12.1 $\Omega$ /km [length of the cable = 90 m]

to the common bus point of DERs *via* a VSC. VSCs at the grid connection, boost converters at DERs, and bidirectional converters at the battery operate in grid-forming mode [65]. Boost converters at solar PV and wind turbine systems track maximum power points. The DC fast chargers are integrated with DC-DC converters, and voltage and

current measurements are recorded. Voltage imbalance, caused by uneven load distribution across positive and negative lines, is mitigated using a voltage balance circuit [66]. The Circuit Breakers (CBs) [27] are positioned at line segment ends for fault protection. A critical issue is that a fault near a specific load (*e.g.*, load  $R_{L1}$ ) triggers the isolation of



**Fig. 2.** Equivalent circuit for a LL SC fault in the load zone of the DC microgrid.

the entire section A (all loads connected to the same PCC) by existing methods. This is inefficient. Implementing individual protection for each load branch increases cost and system complexity. Therefore, the objective of this study is to develop a method for detecting, locating, and isolating faults within individual load branches, minimizing the overall protection system cost.

Figure 1 shows a system comprising PV arrays, wind turbines, and battery storage connected to a DC grid via DC–DC converters. The loads are grouped into zones based on their location, with each zone representing a local load for a specific DC–DC converter. The DC CB operation is managed by  $R_S$  and a control unit. These  $R_S$  receive voltage and current information from both ends of each line segment via voltage and current  $R_S$ . The analyses  $R_S$  analyse this data and then send control signals to the appropriate CBs. A precise timing protocol is crucial for data synchronization within the DCMG [67]. The DC–DC converters operate dynamically to meet varying load demands. Specifically, DC–DC converter-I (the PV-side boost converter) operates in Maximum Power Point Tracking (MPPT) mode. DC–DC converter-II (the battery-side bidirectional converter) maintains the DC bus voltage. The system faults cause drastic changes in the converters' operating points. If the controller fails to detect these changes, bus voltages can collapse, potentially leading to system-wide de-energisation [68, 69]. The risk of fire also exists, depending on the fault's location and type.

For this analysis, cable inductance ( $L_C$ ) is considered negligible compared to cable resistance ( $R_C$ ) (i.e.,  $Z_C = R_C$ ), simplifying the equivalent impedance calculation. The cable resistances between loads and PCCs A and B are denoted as  $R_{Cji} = 1 - 6$ , and the resistance between converters is  $R_{C12}$ . Figure 2 shows the equivalent DCMG circuit during a fault. Six loads ( $R_{L1} - R_{L6}$ ) are connected to the grid via cable resistances ( $R_{C1} - R_{C6}$ ). The loads  $R_{L1}$ ,  $R_{L2}$ ,  $R_{L3}$ ,  $R_{L4}$ ,  $R_{L5}$ , and  $R_{L6}$  are local loads for capacitors  $C_1 - C_5$ , respectively [70].  $R_{C12}$  represents the resistance between both source and load converters. The load voltages are defined as  $v_{oA}$ ,  $v_{oB}$ ,  $v_{oC}$ ,  $v_{oD}$ ,  $v_{oE}$ , and  $v_{oF}$ . A LL fault with resistance  $R_{f1}$  is introduced near load  $R_{L1}$  (in load zone 1). Upon fault occurrence, bus voltages  $v_A$  and  $v_B$  rapidly decrease, potentially de-energizing the system [71, 72]. Simultaneously, capacitors ( $C_1 - C_5$ ) discharge quickly, significantly contributing to the fault current during the

transient period. After complete capacitor discharge, the system reaches a steady state where active sources (DER and BES, referring to converter output) supply limited fault current ( $i_{PVOS}$ ,  $i_{WOS}$ ,  $i_{GOS}$ ,  $i_{B1OS}$  and  $i_{B2OS}$ ). This dominant capacitor discharge characteristic forms the basis for fault detection. The KCL is applied at nodes A and B to determine each source's contribution, as expressed in (1). The relationship between the resistance seen by capacitor  $C_j$  and its average current  $i_{C_{jj=1-5}}$  is generalized in (1).

Using an initial capacitor voltage  $V_C(0) = V_S = 90$  V,  $C = 473.4692$   $\mu$ F, and varying equivalent resistances ( $R_{Ceq}$ ) are analysed for both HIFs and LIFs. The stored capacitor energy,  $E_C = \frac{1}{2} CV_C^2$ , is 0.7 J in all cases. Capacitor discharge rate varies inversely with fault resistance ( $R_f$ ) and lower  $R_f$  leads to faster discharge. Because the fault occurs in the load zone, the load contribution to the equivalent resistance seen by the capacitor is neglected [73, 74]. The resulting equivalent circuit is shown in Figure 3.

$$\begin{cases} i_{PV0}(t) = i_{PVOS}(t) + i_{C1}(t) \\ i_{W0}(t) = i_{WOS}(t) + i_{C2}(t) \\ i_{G0}(t) = i_{GOS}(t) + i_{C3}(t) \\ i_{B10}(t) = i_{B1OS}(t) + i_{C4}(t) \\ i_{B20}(t) = i_{B2OS}(t) + i_{C5}(t) \end{cases}, \quad (1)$$

$$i_{Cj}(t) = \frac{V_{Cj}(0)}{R_{Ceqj}} * e^{(-t/R_{Ceqj} * Cj)}, \quad (2)$$

where  $i_{PV0}(t)$ ,  $i_{W0}(t)$ ,  $i_{G0}(t)$ ,  $i_{B10}(t)$ , and  $i_{B20}(t)$  are the output currents of the different converters.  $R_{Ceqj}$  consists of various resistances like  $R_{Lj}$ ,  $R_C$ , and  $R_f$ .

## 2.1 During the transient-state period

During the fault transient, fast-discharging capacitors dominate the fault current, making active source contributions negligible ( $i_{PV0}(t) \ll i_{C1}(t)$ ,  $i_{W0}(t) \ll i_{C2}(t)$ ,  $i_{G0}(t) \ll i_{C3}(t)$ ,  $i_{B10}(t) \ll i_{C4}(t)$ , and  $i_{B20}(t) \ll i_{C5}(t)$ ), is represented as (3). A transient equivalent circuit is shown in Figure 4.

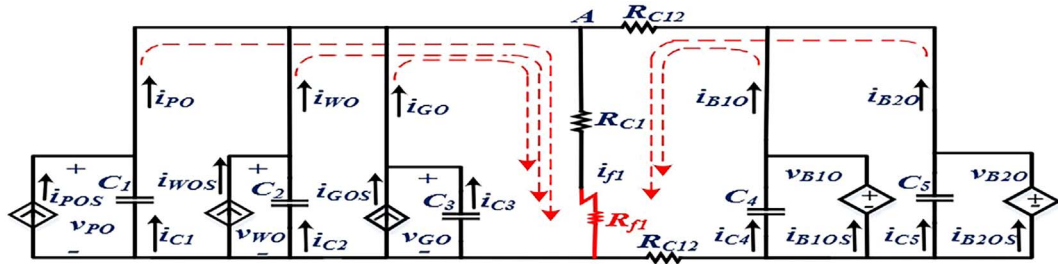


Fig. 3. A simplified equivalent circuit model of the DC microgrid.

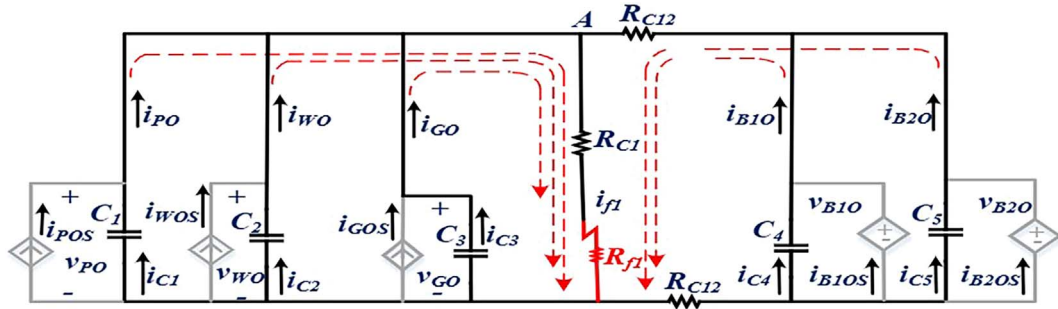


Fig. 4. Simplified equivalent transient-state circuit model of a DC microgrid.

$$\begin{cases} i_{PVO}(t) \approx i_{C1}(t) \\ i_{WO}(t) \approx i_{C2}(t) \\ i_{GO}(t) \approx i_{C3}(t) \\ i_{B1O}(t) \approx i_{C4}(t) \\ i_{B2O}(t) \approx i_{C5}(t) \end{cases} \quad (3)$$

## 2.2 During the steady-state period

After the discharging capacitors are fully discharged, as shown in (4), only active sources to feed the fault contribute to the fault at this time. A steady-state sample equivalent circuit is shown in Figure 5.

$$\begin{cases} i_{PVO}(t) \approx i_{PVOS}(t) \\ i_{WO}(t) \approx i_{WOS}(t) \\ i_{GO}(t) \approx i_{GOS}(t) \\ i_{B1O}(t) \approx i_{B1OS}(t) \\ i_{B2O}(t) \approx i_{B2OS}(t) \end{cases} \quad (4)$$

## 3 Fault detection approach

The discharging capacitors in DCMG respond rapidly to DC-link faults. Their dynamic behaviour is exploited for fault detection, as the capacitor current exhibits a peak spike towards the fault [75, 76]. The peak current magnitude depends on the fault type and location. DER and battery  $j$ th capacitors discharge their stored energy  $\left(\frac{1}{2} C_j v_{C_j}^2 = \frac{1}{2} C_j i_{C_j}^2 R_{Ceqj}^2\right)$  during a transient period before

reaching zero in a steady state. For a constant 90 V across  $C_j$ , the power in  $C_j$  is similarly determined. Despite the RC circuit configuration, power dissipates through a resistive path associated with  $C_j$ . Generally, the peak discharge current depends on  $R_{Ceqj}$ , when the discharge current is expressed as  $i_C = \frac{V_C}{R_{Ceq}} * e^{(-t/R_{Ceq} * C)}$ . The peak discharge current reflects the fault type, as it's influenced by the equivalent resistance of parallel loads, cables, and fault resistance [77, 78]. In this method, comparing the current patterns from the capacitor under dynamic conditions is essential to locate the fault accurately.

$$\begin{aligned} & R_{Ceq1}(k) \quad \text{and} \quad R_{Ceq2}(k) \\ R_{B1} &= R_{C1} + \frac{R_{l1} * R_{f1}}{R_{l1} + R_{f1}}; R_{B2} = R_{C2} + R_{l2}; R_{B3} = R_{C3} \\ & + R_{l3}; R_{B4} = R_{C4} + R_{l4}; R_{B5} = R_{C5} + R_{l5}; \\ R_{B6} &= R_{C6} + R_{l6}; R_{Ceq1}(k-1); \text{and } R_{Ceq2}(k-1) \\ R_{Beq1} &= \frac{R_{B1} * R_{B2}}{R_{B1} + R_{B2}}; R_{Beq2} = \frac{R_{B3} * R_{B4}}{R_{B3} + R_{B4}}; R_{Beq3} = \frac{R_{B5} * R_{B6}}{R_{B5} + R_{B6}}; \\ R_{Ceq1} &= \frac{R_{Beq2} * R_{Beq3}}{R_{Beq2} + R_{Beq3}}; R_{Ceq2} = R_{Ceq1} + 2R_{C12} + R_{Beq1}; \end{aligned}$$

where  $R_C$  is the cable (line) resistance,  $R_{Lj}$  is the resistance of the different load zones (*i.e.*,  $R_{l1}$ ,  $R_{l2}$ ,  $R_{l3}$ ,  $R_{l4}$ ,  $R_{l5}$ , and  $R_{l6}$ ), and  $R_f$  is the fault resistance.

Figure 6 shows the flowchart for the proposed fault detection and location method. The algorithm starts with the  $R_S$  setup, after which the  $R_S$  exclusively collect the capacitor currents  $i_{C_j} = i_{C1} - i_{C5}$ . The process involves sampling, averaging the sample flows, and calculating fault indices. The detailed flowchart steps are given below.

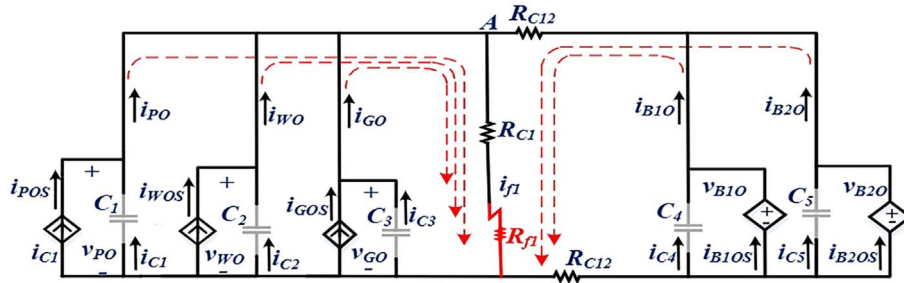


Fig. 5. Simplified equivalent steady-state circuit model of a DC microgrid.

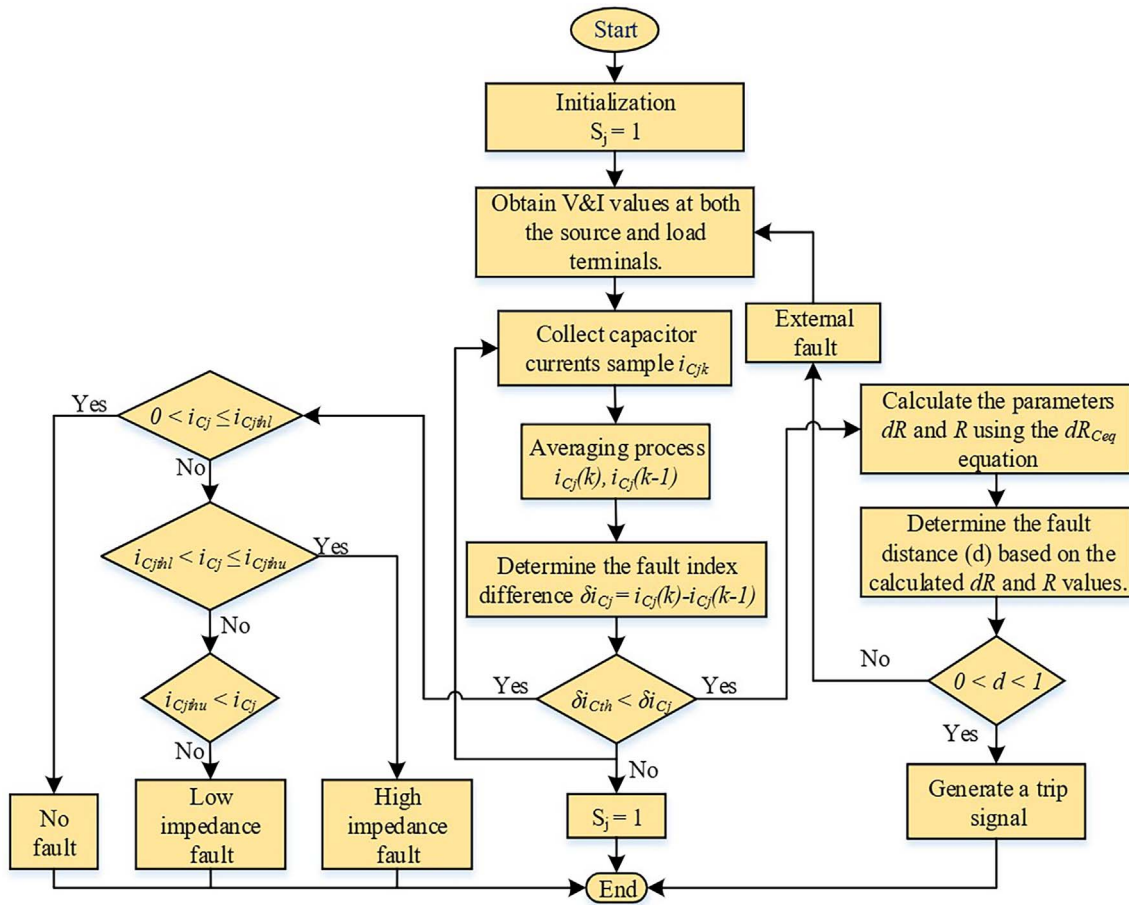


Fig. 6. Flowchart of the proposed fault detection and location algorithm.

### 3.1 Sampling capacitor currents ( $i_{Cj}$ )

The Analogue-To-Digital Converter (ADC) samples currents, with  $(k)$  and  $(k-1)$  denoting present and previous sampling times. The present and previous average patterns for the  $j$ th capacitor currents are given in (5) and (6). The corresponding times are defined as the difference between samples,  $t_k$  and  $t_{k-1}$ . The capacitor current is displayed by the fault equations in load zone 1, which are detailed

in Figure 7. The average sample currents for the capacitor  $i_{C1}$  are represented by  $\bar{i}_{C1}(k)$  and  $\bar{i}_{C1}(k-1)$ .

$$\bar{i}_{Cj}(k) = \frac{V_{sj}(t_k)}{R_{Ceqj}(k)} * e^{(-t_k/R_{Ceqj}(k)*Cj)}, \quad (5)$$

$$\bar{i}_{Cj}(k-1) = \frac{V_{sj}(t_{k-1})}{R_{Ceqj}(k-1)} * e^{(-t_{k-1}/R_{Ceqj}(k-1)*Cj)}. \quad (6)$$

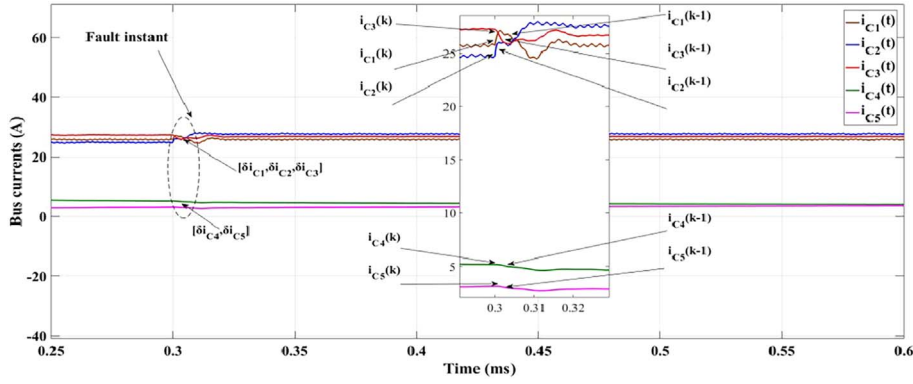


Fig. 7. Simulation-based validation of the derived equation.

At fault inception, the equivalent resistance remains constant:  $R_{Ceqj}(k) \neq R_{Ceqj}(k-1)$ .

### 3.2 Fault index ( $\delta i_{Cj}$ )

Equation (7) calculates the fault index “ $\delta i_{Cj}$ ”, which represents the difference between consecutive current samples.

$$\delta i_{Cj} = \overline{i_{Cj}}(k) - \overline{i_{Cj}}(k-1), \quad (7)$$

$$\delta i_{Cj} = \frac{V_{sj}(t_k)}{R_{Ceqj}(k)} * e^{(-t_k/R_{Ceqj}(k)*Cj)} - \frac{V_{sj}(t_{k-1})}{R_{Ceqj}(k-1)} * e^{(-t_{k-1}/R_{Ceqj}(k-1)*Cj)}. \quad (8)$$

At fault initiation, the  $j$ th capacitor’s voltage remains constant,  $V_{sj}(t_k) \approx V_{sj}(t_{k-1}) \approx V_{sj}$  with a maintained voltage of 90 V. Therefore, equation (8) can be simplified to equation (9).

$$\delta i_{Cj} = V_{sj} \left[ \frac{1}{R_{Ceqj}(k)} * e^{(-t_k/R_{Ceqj}(k)*Cj)} - \frac{1}{R_{Ceqj}(k-1)} * e^{(-t_{k-1}/R_{Ceqj}(k-1)*Cj)} \right]. \quad (9)$$

### 3.3 Fault detection and characterization

The presented DCMG configuration employs six discharging capacitors, necessitating six  $R_S$  for capacitor current measurement, crucial for reliable system operation. The proposed fault detection methodology is shown in Figure 6. The process begins by initializing  $R_S$  states ( $S_j$ ), where  $S_j = 1$  denotes an active state and  $S_j = 0$  an inactive state, represented by the  $R_S$  state vector [79, 80]. The  $R_S$  states are determined through a sampling procedure and transmitted to CBs, ensuring a timely response. Sampled capacitor currents  $\overline{i_{Ci}}(k)$  are averaged to generate present and past sample models,  $\overline{i_{Ci}}(k)$  and  $\overline{i_{Ci}}(k-1)$ , for comparative analysis. The fault index ( $\delta i_{Ci}$ ) is subsequently calculated using (7), a key metric for fault detection. The RC discharge circuit’s time constant is inversely proportional to fault resistance

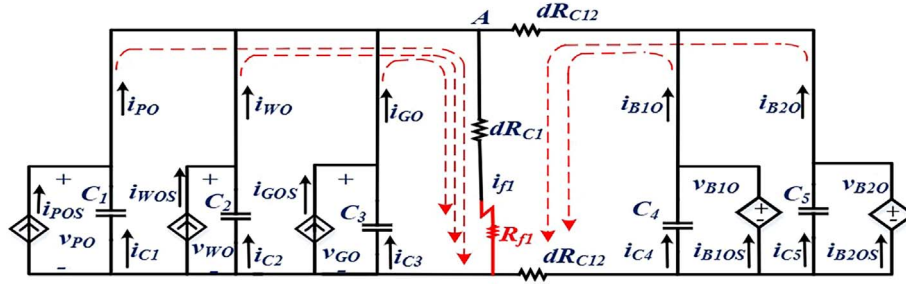
and directly proportional to peak discharge current [81]. Consequently, LIFs display faster capacitor discharge and higher peak current magnitudes than HIFs, affecting system stability and safety. The decay of  $i_C$  is exponential at the initial stage of the fault. After the system reaches a steady state, it becomes difficult to isolate the issue, which could have an impact on consumer power quality and grid stability [82, 83]. A detection threshold ( $\delta i_{Cth}$ ) is defined for each  $j$ th capacitor to detect both HIFs and LIFs, ensuring comprehensive protection. Lower and upper characterization thresholds ( $i_{Cthl}$  and  $i_{Cthu}$ ) are defined based on  $\overline{i_{Cj}}$ , which is influenced by  $R_f$ . Fault resistances ( $R_f$ ) exceeding  $1\Omega$  are classified as HIFs, while those within  $0 < R_f < 1\Omega$  are classified as LIFs [4], reflecting industry standards. This ensures community safety and minimizes disruption.

Analytical analysis using (2) for a 2.3 kW/90 V DCMG reveals maximum capacitor ( $C_1$ – $C_5$ ) discharge currents ranging from approximately 28–2 A for fault resistances ( $R_{fl}$ ) between 0.1  $\Omega$  and 10  $\Omega$ . Immediately following a fault, the calculated  $\delta i_{Cj}$  surpasses the detection threshold ( $\delta i_{Cth}$ ) of 0.2 A. The corresponding zone is flagged as faulty when  $\delta i_{Cj}$  exceeds  $\delta i_{Cth}$ . Based on these findings, the fault characterization threshold ( $\delta i_{Cthl}$ ) must be 4 A to effectively distinguish between faults and other system disturbances. To minimize misclassification,  $i_{Cthl}$  and  $i_{Cthu}$  are set to 2.5 A and 30 A, respectively. If  $i_{Cj}$  falls below  $i_{Cthb}$ , a “no-fault” condition is assumed. Conversely, if  $\delta i_{Cj}$  exceeds  $i_{Cthu}$ , a “LIF” is classified. “HIF” detection occurs when  $\delta i_{Cj}$  lies between these thresholds. The misclassification index is defined in (10). This approach aims to minimize power interruptions, ensuring community reliance on a stable energy supply.

$$\therefore \overline{i_{Cj}} \in \begin{cases} 0 < i_{Cj} \leq i_{Cthl}; \text{No Fault} \\ i_{Cthl} < i_{Cj} \leq i_{Cthu}; \text{HIF} \\ i_{Cthu} < i_{Cj}; \text{LIF} \end{cases}. \quad (10)$$

### 3.4 Prediction of fault location in DC microgrid

The fault location method determines fault distance by analysing line data. The estimating line resistance and total line resistance enable fault point distance calculation, as shown



**Fig. 8.** Simplified equivalent circuit during fault location based on the DC microgrid.

in [Figure 8](#). A bus system, with multiple voltage sources supplying fault current  $\delta i_{Cj}$ , is used to illustrate the LG fault location algorithm. This ensures efficient power restoration, minimizing disruption in the grid line.

$$\delta i_{Cj} = V_{sj} \left[ \frac{1}{R_{dCeqj}(k)} * e^{(-t_k/R_{dCeqj}(k)*C_j)} - \frac{1}{R_{dCeqj}(k-1)} * e^{(-t_{k-1}/R_{dCeqj}(k-1)*C_j)} \right]. \quad (11)$$

The above-given equation can be rewritten for fault location prediction.

$$i_{Cj}(t) = \frac{V_{Cj}(0)}{dR_{Ceqj}} * e^{(-td/R_{Ceqj}*C_j)},$$

$$dR_{B1} = dR_{C1} + \frac{R_{l1} * R_{f1}}{R_{l1} + R_{f1}}; dR_{B2} = dR_{C2} + R_{l2}; dR_{B3} = dR_{C3} + R_{l3}; dR_{B4} = dR_{C4} + R_{l4}; dR_{B5} = dR_{C5} + R_{l5}; dR_{B6} = dR_{C6} + R_{l6}$$

$$dR_{Beq1} = \frac{dR_{B1} * dR_{B2}}{dR_{B1} + dR_{B2}}; dR_{Beq2} = \frac{dR_{B3} * dR_{B4}}{dR_{B3} + dR_{B4}}; dR_{Beq3} = \frac{dR_{B5} * dR_{B6}}{dR_{B5} + dR_{B6}}$$

$$dR_{Ceq1} = \frac{dR_{Beq1} * dR_{Beq2}}{dR_{Beq1} + dR_{Beq2}}; dR_{Ceq2} = dR_{Ceq1} + 2dR_{C12} + dR_{Beq1}. \quad (12)$$

$\therefore$  location-based discharged  $j$ th capacitor current is

$$i_{Cj}(t) = \frac{V_{Cj}(0)}{dR_{Ceqj}} * e^{(-td/R_{Ceqj}*C_j)}. \quad (13)$$

The determination of the fault distance, denoted as “ $d$ ”, is achieved through a calculation as

$$\therefore d = \frac{dR}{R} * l, \quad (14)$$

where  $d$  is the fault distance from any source of the node point bus,  $dR$  is  $R_C$  up to the fault point,  $R$  is the DC line segment resistance, and  $l$  is the line segment of overall length, respectively. The estimated percentage error of fault location is expressed as

$$\%Error = \frac{d_{cal} - d_{act}}{d_{act}} * 100. \quad (15)$$

If the fault index difference  $\delta i_{Cj}$  exceeds a predetermined threshold ( $\zeta$ ) and the fault distance ( $d$ ) falls within  $0 < d < 1$ . The algorithm identifies an internal fault, triggering

a CB trip signal for protection. The algorithm of the flowchart is shown in [Figure 6](#), voltage and current data are initially received at line segment endpoints from  $R_S$ . Equation (7) is used to estimate the fault index of the  $j$ th capacitor current. If the fault index difference surpasses the threshold, the fault is detected, initiating classification and location procedures. Following the classification, the fault location algorithm commences. In this phase,  $R_S$  estimate line resistance ( $R$ ) and fault point resistance ( $dR$ ) using (13). The fault distance ( $d$ ) is calculated using the formula (14). This ensures rapid fault mitigation, minimising power disruptions that impact grid well-being.

### 3.5 Fault isolation process

To pinpoint the fault location between the source and the load, an iterative procedure based on  $\delta i_{Cj}$  is employed. It initiates with a  $R_S$  trip signal (TS = 0, where 0 = off, 1 = on), and the algorithm continuously monitors  $\delta i_{Cj}$ . If  $\delta i_{Cj}$  remains above  $i_{Cthl}$  after tripping the  $R_S$ , it indicates a system fault or a fault in a non-responsive load. The algorithm then deactivates the subsequent  $R_S$  (TS = 0). If the calculated fault distance falls within  $0 < d < 1$ , the algorithm classifies the fault as internal or external. This iterative process continues until the fault is located. Upon detecting an internal fault, permanent trip signals are sent to all  $R_S$ , triggering CBs to isolate the fault. This approach minimizes power disruption, ensuring grid safety and maintaining essential services.

### 3.6 Working of the proposed scheme

[Figure 6](#) shows a flowchart of the proposed algorithm, specifically developed for real-time fault identification and localization in a DCMG based on capacitor current transient dynamics. The algorithm begins with system initialization, where a control flag  $S_j$  is assigned the value of 1, indicating an active monitoring state. Following initialization, the algorithm systematically acquires voltage ( $V$ ) and current ( $I$ ) values from both the source and load terminals. Simultaneously, it samples capacitor currents  $i_{Cj}(k)$  at each zone within the DCMG. A key step involves computing the fault index  $\delta i_{Cj}$ , which is the difference between the current capacitor sample  $i_{Cj}(k)$  and its immediate past value  $i_{Cj}(k-1)$ , thereby detecting transient anomalies. This computed fault index is then compared against a pre-set threshold  $\delta i_{Cth}$ . If  $\delta i_{Cj} > \delta i_{Cth}$  a possible fault is identified.

Subsequently, the nature of the fault is classified by comparing the magnitude of  $i_{Cj}$  against two characterization thresholds – lower  $i_{Cthl}$  and upper  $i_{Cthu}$  – to distinguish between low-impedance and HIFs. Upon confirming a fault, the algorithm proceeds to calculate fault distance ( $d$ ) by determining the segment resistance ( $dR$ ) and estimating equivalent resistance  $dR_{eq}$ . If the computed distance lies within the cable length ( $0 < d < 1$ ), the algorithm activates a trip signal to isolate the faulted section. If the fault is external or  $\delta i_{Cj}$  is below the threshold, the system resets. This real-time scheme enhances protection reliability in DCMGs.

## 4 Analysis of simulation results and related discussion

### 4.1 Configuration of the simulation model

Figure 1 shows a DCMG model with an LL-based SC fault simulated in MATLAB/Simulink to evaluate the effectiveness of the proposed fault detection scheme. The system components and parameters are presented in Table 1. A common DC bus connects six loads with a total power of 100 W. Each load zone is powered by a specific source (PV, wind, UG,  $Bat_1$ ,  $Bat_2$ ). The PV and wind converters operate in maximum power point tracking (MPPT) mode, while the battery converter regulates the DC-link voltage at 90 V. The active PV and Battery sources supply 2.32 kW and 253 W, respectively. Although the simulation framework effectively supports fault-detection validation in a realistic DCMG scenario, the results presented lack clarity. The analysis of system behaviour under various fault conditions is insufficient and should be more explicitly addressed to strengthen the study's impact.

### 4.2 A computational modelling study

This study examines the proposed algorithm's performance under various LL SC faults within the simulated DCMG.

1) case 1: Detection of Faults with High Impedance: An LL fault with  $9 \Omega$  resistance ( $R_{f1}$ ) is introduced near a load in zone 1 at 0.3 ms. Figure 9a displays the resulting load voltage waveforms, illustrating the fault's impact. This study provides insight into HIF behaviour under specific conditions. The capacitor currents  $\overline{i_{C1}}(k)$  to  $\overline{i_{C5}}(k)$ , and their delayed versions  $\overline{i_{C1}}(k-1)$  to  $\overline{i_{C5}}(k-1)$ , are shown in Figure 9b, with a TS delay of 40  $\mu$ s. During fault initiation, capacitors  $C_1$ – $C_3$  face lower resistance than  $C_4$ – $C_5$ , resulting in higher discharge currents. The  $\delta i_{C1}$ – $\delta i_{C3}$  values exceed the threshold  $\delta i_{Cth}$ , identifying zone 1 as the fault area. Relay ( $R_1$ ) isolates the fault, de-energizing  $R_{L1}$  ( $v_{oA} = i_{oA} = 0$ ), while other buses are restored within milliseconds. The observed transient signals align with earlier analysis. The  $i_{C1}$ – $i_{C3}$  are classified as HIFs, as their peaks exceed  $\delta i_{Cth}$  but not  $\delta i_{Cthu}$ . Although the algorithm demonstrates reliable HIF detection and fault isolation. A more detailed explanation of the system's dynamic response and current behavior under HIF scenarios is needed. Addressing this will enhance the analysis and improve the understanding

of the proposed method's reliability in realistic fault conditions.

2) Case 2: Detection of Faults with Low Impedance: A similar methodology is applied for LIF detection. An LL fault with resistance ( $R_{f5}$ ) of  $0.5 \Omega$  is introduced near  $R_{L5}$  in load zone 2. Figure 10 illustrates the resulting bus voltages and capacitor currents. The calculated  $\delta i_{C4}$ – $\delta i_{C5}$  values exceed the threshold  $\delta i_{th}$ , while  $\delta i_{C1}$ – $\delta i_{C3}$  remain below it, confirming zone 2 as the fault location and isolating  $R_{L5}$ . The LIF condition is validated by  $i_{C3}$  exceeding  $\delta i_{Cthu}$ . The algorithm's selectivity is evident as the fault index remains below  $i_{thl}$  during load variations, preventing false trips. However, the clarity of these results remains limited, making it difficult to interpret the capacitor current behavior during LIF events. A more detailed analysis is needed to effectively demonstrate the algorithm's robustness under varying fault conditions.

The capacitor current dynamics ( $C_4$ – $C_5$ ) during LIF ( $R_{f5} = 0.5 \Omega$ ) LL faults in load zones 1 and 2 are depicted in Figures 11a and 11b, demonstrating the algorithm's ability to distinguish between fault locations. In both figures,  $Q_1$ – $Q_3$  represents capacitor currents ( $i_{C1}$ – $i_{C5}$ ) before and after steady-state faults. At time  $t_1$ , a fault in load zone 1 causes  $C_1$ – $C_3$  to encounter higher resistance than  $C_4$ – $C_5$ , resulting in lower peak discharge currents for  $i_{C1}$ – $i_{C3}$  than  $i_{C4}$ – $i_{C5}$ . At time  $t_2$ , a fault in zone 2 creates lower resistance at  $C_4$ – $C_5$ , leading to a higher discharge peak than  $i_{C1}$ – $i_{C3}$ . This confirms the algorithm's ability to identify fault zones by analyzing peak capacitor currents during transient conditions. The scheme also supports fast detection; for instance, an LIF with  $R_{f1} = 9 \Omega$  near  $R_{L1}$  is identified by sensing capacitor current at  $t_1$ . The corresponding fault index  $\delta i_{Cj}$  is computed using algorithm (6), validating the method's performance in real-time detection and localization. However, while the results suggest accurate operation, the explanation lacks clarity. A more detailed analytical interpretation of the capacitor behavior under different fault cases is needed to clearly support the claimed robustness of the proposed method.

### 4.3 EV state during charge level and non-faulty variations.

The proposed algorithm's safety is evaluated during EV charger activation on a DCMG bus, with the initial EV charge state set at 20%. The  $R_S$  current measurements are shown in Figure 11. Due to the high inrush current of the EV charger, conventional overcurrent protection proves less effective in DCMGs. However, the proposed algorithm consistently ensures reliable fault detection during EV charger switching, demonstrating robustness against dynamic load variations, secure operation, and prevention of false trips. This reinforces DCMG security during EV charging, a vital aspect of grid stability. Figure 12 illustrates the dynamic response of a non-faulty load during remote fault conditions. At 0.3 ms, faults at  $R_{L1}$  ( $9 \Omega$ ) and  $R_{L5}$  ( $0.5 \Omega$ ) trigger isolation. The TS isolates the fault, as reflected in switch state transitions. The no-faulty load voltage ( $V_{OC}$ ) shows a transient dip but quickly returns to nominal, confirming voltage resilience. Similarly, the capacitor current

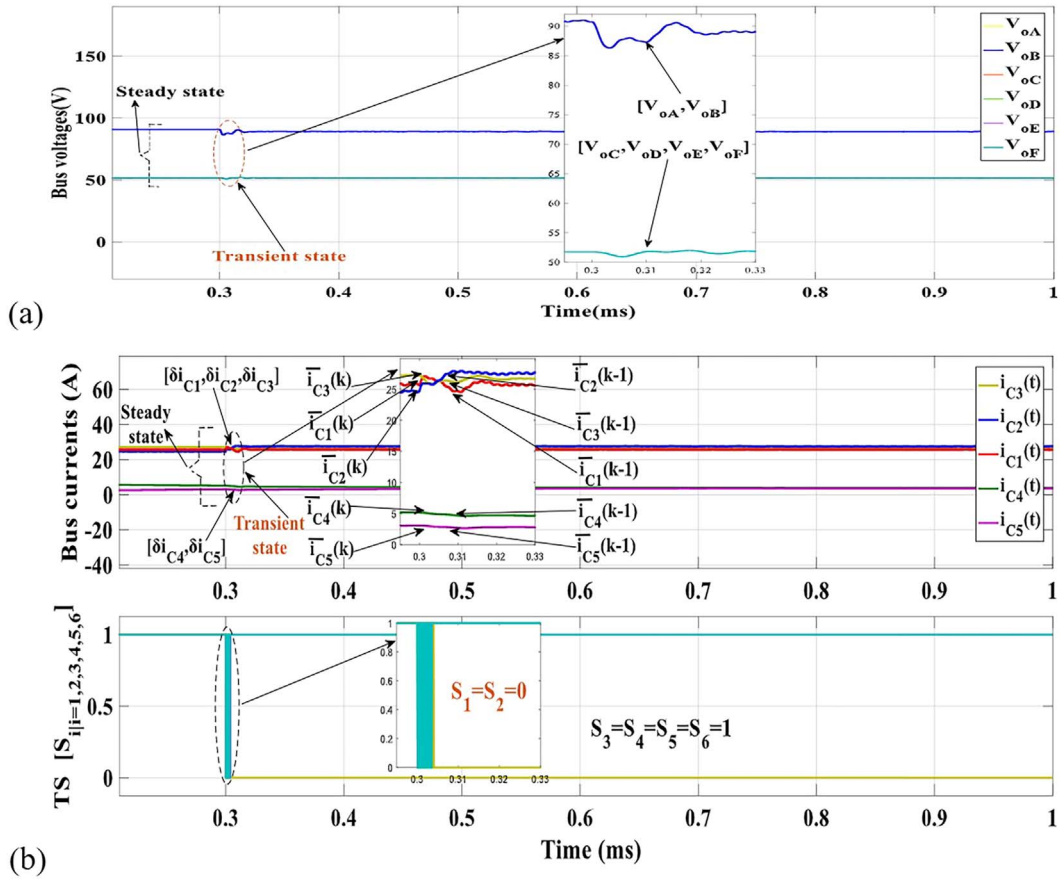


Fig. 9. Results during the fault at load zone 1 (a) Bus Voltage. (b) Capacitor current and Trip signal.

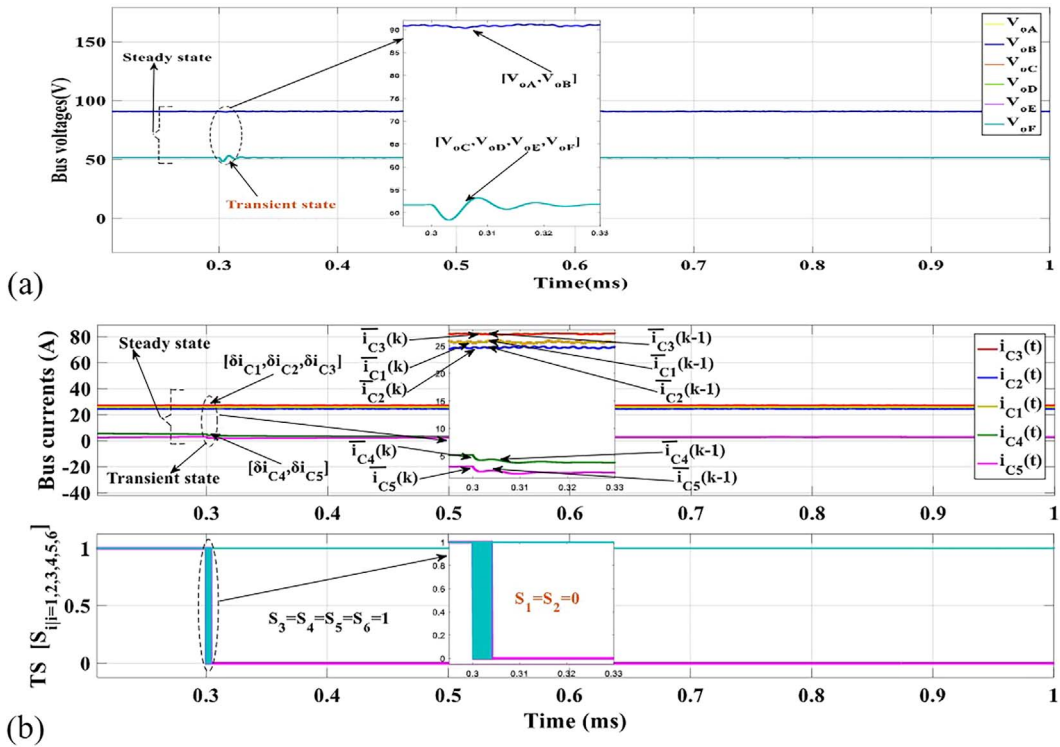
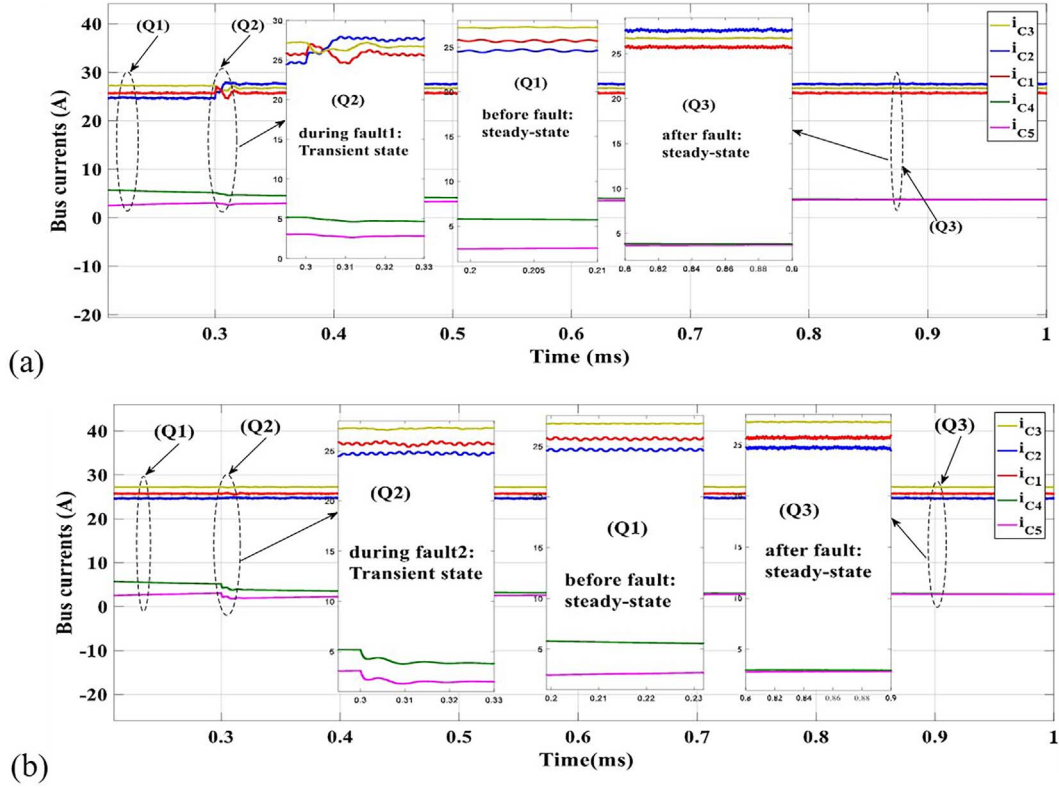
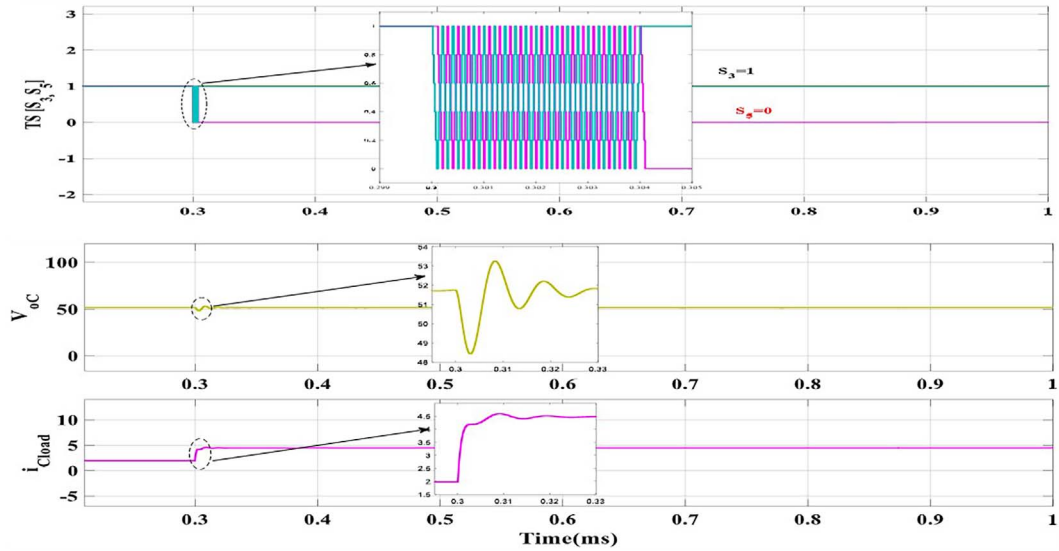


Fig. 10. Results during the fault at load zone 2 (a) Bus Voltage. (b) Capacitor current and Trip signal.



**Fig. 11.** Capacitor currents ( $i_{C1} - i_{C5}$ ) behavior during a low-impedance LL fault. (a) At  $t_1$  A fault occurred in load zone 1 near  $R_{L1}$ . (a) At  $t_2$  A fault occurred in load zone 2 near  $R_{L5}$ .



**Fig. 12.** Contribution of the capacitor for nonfaulty load, *i.e.*,  $R_{L3}$ .

( $I_{Load}$ ) for the non-faulty load spikes and then stabilizes, indicating current regulation. Although the results demonstrate fault-handling capabilities, the reviewer observes a lack of clarity in the presentation. The explanation of system dynamics during EV charging and non-faulty load responses requires further analytical depth to better validate the algorithm's effectiveness under such operating conditions.

#### 4.4 DC Microgrid operation under fluctuating generation conditions

To assess the algorithm's performance under variable generation conditions, the irradiance of a PV panel connected to a DC bus is increased by 25% within 0.3 s. This results in a corresponding increase in the load output voltage at 0.3 s, as shown in Figure 13a. The DERs of capacitive currents

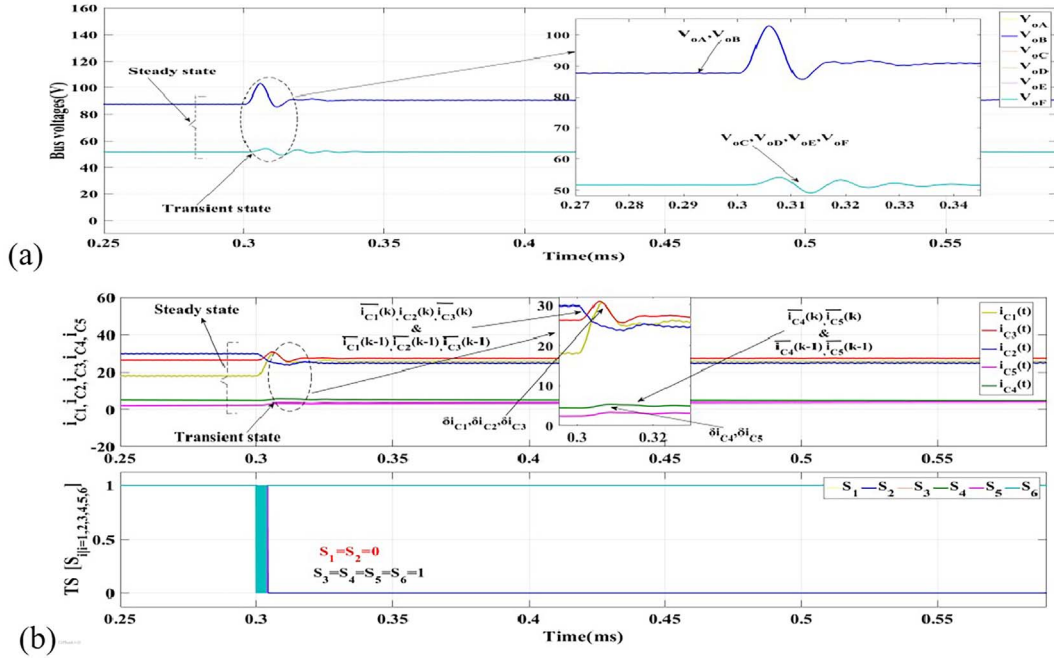


Fig. 13. Results during the changes of DERs (a) Bus Voltage. (b) Capacitor current and Trip signal.

Table 2. Comparative analysis of fault detection and location methods.

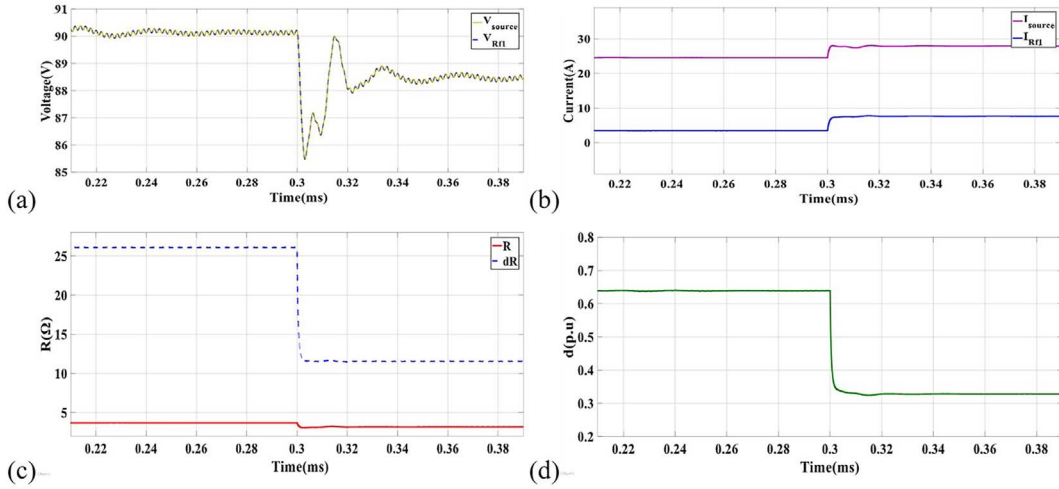
Parameters	Various fault detection and location methods													
	PS	[13]	[19]	[23]	[64]	[22]	[4]	[18]	[21]	[5]	[7]	[15]	[36]	[37]
FD parameters	C-C	FC-C	L-C	L-C and LV	L-C	C-C	C-C	L-C	L-I	L-C	C-C	C-C	L-C	C-C
No. of sources	5	4	4	6	4	2	4	2	2	6	1	7	4	6
$R_f$	10	0.1	0.6	200	2	10	25	x	x	50	10	2	100	2
Sensing (v, i)	i	i	i	v, i	I	i	i, v	i	i, v	i, v	v, i	v, i	v, i	i
FD time (ms)	2.3	1.98	x	<2	2	1.5	1.25	x	10	2	1.25	100	19	1
FL (TL, LS)	LS	TL	TL	TL	TL	LS	TL	TL	LS	TL	TL	TL	T-L	T-L
Fault classification	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Errors in D (%)	2.59	x	x	5	8.32	x	7.1	x	2	3.59	8.7	6.42	1.6	9.75
DCMG with the EV station	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No	No
Cable required for FL calculation	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

PS = proposed scheme, L-C = line current, L-V = line voltage, FC-C = filter capacitor current, C-C = capacitor current, x = not given, FD = fault detection, FL = fault location, TL = transmission line, LS = load side, D = fault distance.

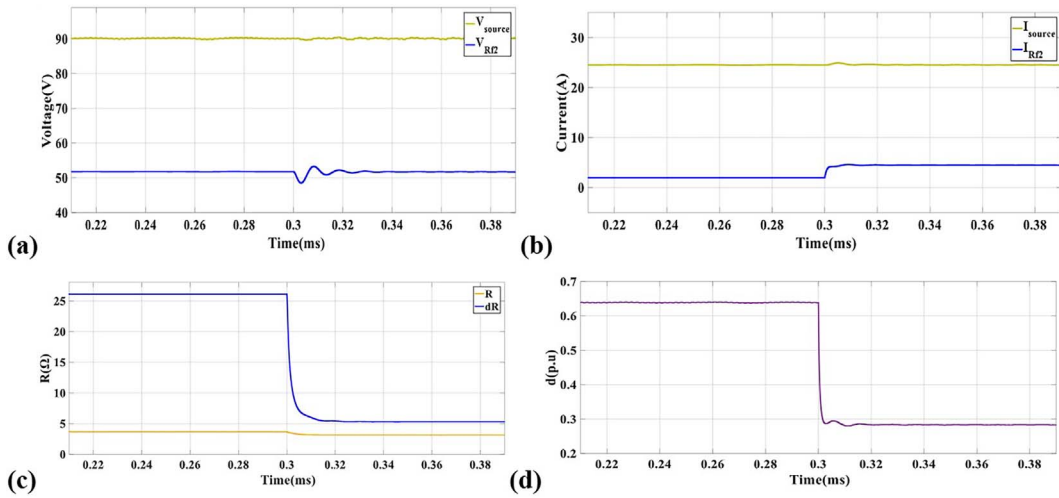
measured at all sources, batteries, and also trip signals, are shown in Figure 13b. The proposed method maintains its security during these variable generation scenarios in the DCMG, demonstrating its robustness against fluctuating power inputs. However, the explanation lacks clarity, and the analysis of the system's transient behavior under such variations needs to be expanded to better validate the algorithm's effectiveness and reliability.

#### 4.5 Precise fault location

The accuracy of the proposed fault location methodology is evaluated by simulating LL faults ( $R_{f1}$  and  $R_{f2}$ ) on the line segment, varying both fault distance ( $d$ ) and fault resistance ( $R_f$ ). Fault distance predictions are performed at  $R_S$  positioned between source and load locations using the proposed approach. The positional errors in fault estimation



**Fig. 14.** L-L fault ( $R_{f1}$ ) of the DCMG (a) Voltages of source and fault load. (b) Currents of source and fault load. (c) Estimated resistance. (d) Fault distance.



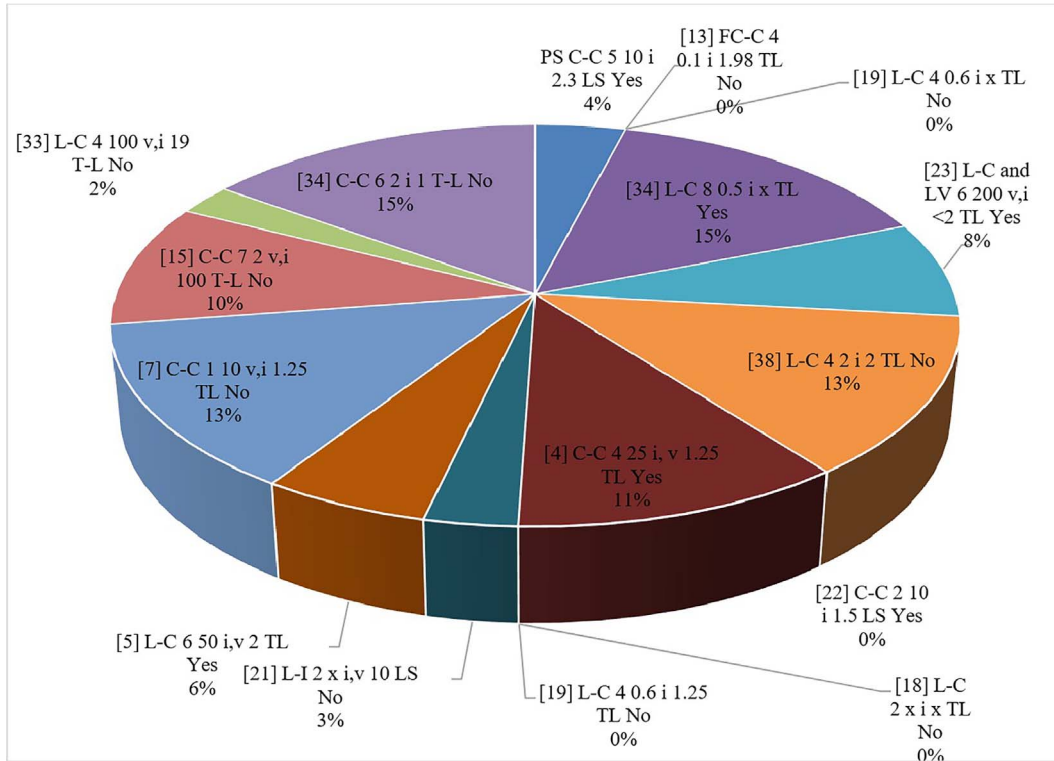
**Fig. 15.** L-L fault ( $R_{f2}$ ) of the DCMG (a) Voltages of source and fault load. (b) Currents of source and fault load. (c) Estimated resistance. (d) Fault distance.

are quantified and presented in Table 2. Results indicate that the maximum error using the proposed fault distance prediction method is 2.59%, validating its capability to provide accurate fault location, critical for efficient fault clearance and minimizing downtime in DCMG systems.

Figures 14a and 15a show the voltage profiles of the source and load during fault conditions. Figures 14b and 15b illustrate the respective current responses. Figures 14c and 15c display the calculated line resistance ( $R$ ) and fault resistances ( $R_{f1}$ ,  $R_{f2}$ ) up to the fault location ( $dR$ ). Figures 14d and 15d present the corresponding fault distances within 1 p.u. for LL faults. These calculations confirm the successful identification of internal faults and prompt activation of trip signals at the appropriate CB. However, while the results indicate promising accuracy, the supporting analysis lacks depth. A more detailed explanation of the resistance estimation and fault location logic is needed for clarity.

#### 4.6 Comparative analysis

Table 2 compares the proposed technique with various existing fault detection and location methods in DCMG. The comparison is based on several parameters, including the type of sensing variable, fault resistance, fault detection time, fault location, and estimated errors. The proposed technique utilizes capacitor current (C-C) as the sensing variable and can detect faults with a resistance of up to 10  $\Omega$ . It has a fault detection time of 2.3 ms and can locate faults on the load side (LS) with an estimated error of 2.59%. Compared to past methods, such as those relying on line current (L-C), line voltage (L-V), or filter capacitor current (FC-C), which either lacked fault classification or had higher detection time and location errors, the proposed method offers superior detection sensitivity and accuracy. Many previous techniques were limited to specific



**Fig. 16.** A comparative study between the newly developed technique and existing protective measures.

conditions or required complex hardware, whereas the proposed scheme achieves effective detection with minimal overhead. Thus, Table 2 highlights a clear improvement in fault management performance by the proposed approach.

A pie chart is used to visualize this comparative analysis in Figure 16. The chart divides parameters into segments, with section sizes proportional to their respective values. It illustrates the share of methods using different sensing variables (C-C, FC-C, L-C, etc.) and reflects trends in detection times. Analytical observation confirms that C-C-based methods dominate due to their balance of speed and reliability. The chart also reveals limitations in earlier techniques, such as a lack of classification or high error rates. In contrast, the proposed method integrates fast detection, fault classification, and accurate location. Overall, the visual analysis reinforces the proposed technique’s advantage over prior work by demonstrating enhanced robustness, reliability, and suitability for modern DCMGs with renewable integration.

### 5 Conclusion

This paper presents a novel SC fault detection and location technique for renewable energy-integrated DCMG. Employing CBs in conjunction with  $R_S$ . The algorithm determines fault locations by comparing line segment energy profiles. Fault zone identification is achieved through analyzing capacitor current dynamics during LL

SC faults. The method estimates fault distances by calculating line and fault point resistances, demonstrating robustness under variable generation and fault scenarios. Comparative assessments reveal the proposed scheme’s enhanced performance compared to existing fault detection and localization methods. This contributes to improved reliability and resilience in DCMG systems, ensuring efficient fault management and minimizing downtime in renewable-based DCMGs.

#### Funding

The authors did not receive any funding.

#### Conflicts of interest

Authors do not have any conflicts.

#### Author contribution statement

Banothu Somanna has designed the framework, analyzed performance, validated the results, and written the article. Sushma Gupta has collected the information required for the framework, provided software, conducted critical reviews, and administered the process.

#### Ethics approval

Does not involve any studies with animals or humans.

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