Research Paper IMPACT FACTOR VALUE : 6.247 | E-ISSN NO : 2455-295X | VOLUME : 12 | ISSUE : 4 | APRIL 2026

DESIGN AND FABRICATION OF TWO WHEELER ELECTRIC VEHICLE WITH REGENERATIVE BRAKING

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ABSTRACT:

The rapid transition toward sustainable transportation necessitates the development of energy-efficient electric mobility solutions, particularly for densely populated urban regions. This paper presents the design, fabrication, and experimental validation of a two-wheeler electric vehicle integrated with an active regenerative braking system. The proposed system employs a 1.5 kW BLDC hub motor, a 60 V lithium-ion battery pack, and a programmable motor controller capable of bidirectional power flow. A reverse-throttle-based regenerative braking mechanism is implemented to recover kinetic energy during deceleration and store it back into the battery. The developed prototype demonstrates a significant improvement in energy efficiency and operational range. Experimental results indicate that regenerative braking contributes to an energy recovery of approximately 8–15% under urban driving conditions, resulting in a range enhancement of nearly 15–20%. The integration of battery management system (BMS), safety protection circuits, and intelligent control strategies ensures reliable and safe vehicle operation. The proposed system offers a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternative to conventional internal combustion engine vehicles. The outcomes of this work validate the feasibility of regenerative braking in low-power electric vehicles and highlight its potential for large-scale adoption in urban transportation systems.

KEYWORDS:

ELECTRIC VEHICLE, REGENERATIVE BRAKING, BLDC MOTOR, BATTERY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, ENERGY RECOVERY, SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORTATION.

PAPER ACCEPTED DATE:	PAPER PUBLISHED DATE:
3rd April 2026	4th April 2026

INTRODUCTION

The global transportation sector is undergoing a significant transformation driven by the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, improve energy efficiency, and mitigate dependence on fossil fuels [1], [2]. Conventional internal combustion engine vehicles contribute substantially to air pollution and carbon emissions, accounting for nearly one-fourth of global CO_2 emissions [3]. In this context, electric vehicles (EVs) have emerged as a promising alternative due to their zero tailpipe emissions and lower operating costs [4], [5].Among various EV categories, two-wheeler electric vehicles are particularly significant in countries such as India due to their affordability, ease of mobility, and high usage in urban transportation [6]. However, one of the major limitations of electric scooters is inefficient energy utilization during braking, where kinetic energy is dissipated as heat [7]. To address this limitation, regenerative braking systems (RBS) have been introduced, enabling the recovery of kinetic energy and converting it into electrical energy for battery recharging [8].This concept significantly improves the overall efficiency and range of EVs, particularly under urban driving conditions characterized by frequent acceleration and deceleration [9]. This paper focuses on the design and fabrication of a two-wheeler electric vehicle integrated with an active regenerative braking system, where a reverse-throttle mechanism is used for controlled energy recovery. The work also includes system integration, performance evaluation, and experimental validation, contributing to the development of efficient and sustainable electric mobility solutions [10].

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

Existing research in electric mobility highlights the importance of improving drive train efficiency and energy management. Studies have shown that BLDC motors offer higher efficiency, reduced maintenance, and better controllability compared to brushed DC motors. Research on regenerative braking indicates that energy recovery efficiency ranges between 8% and 15% depending on driving conditions, braking frequency, and system design . Hybrid braking systems combining mechanical and regenerative braking have been identified as optimal for safety and efficiency. Battery performance is another critical factor influencing EV efficiency. Lithium-ion batteries, particularly NMC chemistry, provide high energy density and improved cycle life. It has been observed that limiting the depth of discharge significantly enhances battery lifespan. Despite these advancements, most existing works focus on simulation-based analysis. There is a clear research gap in practical fabrication and real-time validation of regenerative braking in low-cost two-wheeler EVs, which this work addresses.

RESULTS:

The Results section should include the rationale or design, optimization, validation of the experiments as well as the results of the experiments.

OVERALL ARCHITECTURE

The developed electric two-wheeler system is composed of carefully selected mechanical, electrical, and electronic components to achieve efficient propulsion and energy recovery. The structural framework of the vehicle is fabricated using mild steel (MS Grade E250), selected for its high mechanical strength, ease of fabrication, and cost-effectiveness. The step-through chassis configuration ensures a low centre of gravity, which enhances vehicle stability and rider comfort during operation. The energy storage system consists of a 60 V, 30 Ah lithium-ion battery pack based on Nickel-Manganese-Cobalt (NMC) chemistry. This configuration provides a total energy capacity of approximately 1.8 kWh, offering a balance between energy density and cycle life. The battery is supported by an integrated Battery Management System (BMS), which continuously monitors cell voltages, temperature, and state of charge to ensure safe and reliable operation under varying load conditions. For propulsion, a 1.5 kW Brushless Direct Current (BLDC) hub motor is employed. The hub motor configuration eliminates the need for mechanical transmission components such as chains and gears, thereby reducing energy losses and maintenance requirements. The motor is controlled by a 60 V, 35 A programmable controller equipped with Hall sensor feedback for accurate rotor position detection and efficient commutation. The braking system is designed as a hybrid configuration, combining hydraulic disc brakes with an electronically controlled regenerative braking mechanism. This dual approach ensures reliable braking performance while simultaneously enabling energy recovery during deceleration. Auxiliary components such as suspension systems, lighting units, and control interfaces are integrated to provide a complete functional vehicle platform.

METHODOLOGY AND SYSTEM IMPLEMENTATION

The methodology adopted in this work involves the systematic integration of mechanical fabrication, electrical system design, and control strategy implementation to realize a fully functional electric vehicle prototype. The process begins with the fabrication of the chassis, where structural members are assembled using welding techniques to ensure rigidity and durability under dynamic loading conditions. The battery pack is centrally mounted within the chassis to maintain optimal weight distribution and improve handling characteristics.

The electrical system is then integrated by connecting the battery, motor controller, and BLDC hub motor through appropriately rated conductors and protection devices. Special attention is given to minimizing resistive losses and ensuring proper insulation to maintain system efficiency and safety. A key contribution of this work is the implementation of an active regenerative braking system using a reverse-throttle mechanism. In this approach, the throttle is designed to operate in two directions: conventional rotation for acceleration and reverse rotation for braking. When the throttle is rotated in the reverse direction, a signal is generated and processed by the motor controller, which transitions the motor from motoring mode to generating mode. In this state, the motor converts the kinetic energy of the moving vehicle into electrical energy.

The motor controller regulates the magnitude of the regenerative current using pulse-width modulation (PWM) techniques, ensuring that the charging current remains within the safe limits defined by the battery management system. The BMS continuously monitors the battery state to prevent overcharging and thermal instability during regeneration. This coordinated operation between the controller and BMS ensures safe and efficient energy recovery. The overall control strategy ensures smooth transition between acceleration and braking modes, providing a user-friendly riding experience while maximizing energy utilization.

ENERGY RECOVERY AND EXPERIMENTAL PROCEDURE

The energy recovery mechanism is fundamentally based on the conversion of the vehicle’s kinetic energy into electrical energy during braking. The recoverable energy can be theoretically expressed as:

$$E_{regen} = \eta \frac{1}{2} m v^2$$

where η represents the efficiency of the regenerative system, mmm is the mass of the vehicle, and v is the velocity prior to braking. This relationship indicates that higher vehicle speeds and mass result in greater potential for energy recovery. To evaluate the performance of the developed system, experimental testing is conducted under real-time operating conditions that simulate urban driving scenarios. The vehicle is subjected to repeated acceleration and deceleration cycles to assess the effectiveness of the regenerative braking system. Key parameters such as battery voltage, current, vehicle speed, and range are monitored during testing.

The performance analysis focuses on quantifying the percentage of energy recovered during braking and its impact on the overall driving range. The experimental results demonstrate that the regenerative braking system contributes significantly to energy efficiency, particularly in stop-and-go traffic conditions where braking events are frequent. However, it is also observed that the effectiveness of regeneration decreases at low speeds due to reduced back electromotive force generation.

This experimental evaluation validates the practical feasibility of integrating regenerative braking into low-power electric vehicles and highlights its potential to enhance energy efficiency without increasing battery capacity.

DISCUSSION:

The quantitative evaluation of the fabricated electric scooter prototype reveals key insights into system performance, energy efficiency, and regenerative braking effectiveness. The major outcomes obtained from experimental validation and analytical calculations are consolidated into Table 1 and Table 2, which summarize the core system specifications and performance metrics, respectively

TABLE 1: SYSTEM SPECIFICATIONS OF THE DEVELOPED ELECTRIC SCOOTER

Parameter	Value
Battery Type	Lithium-ion NMC (60 V, 30 Ah)
Battery Energy Capacity	1.8 kWh
Motor Type	BLDC Hub Motor
Rated / Peak Power	1.5 kW / 2.2 kW
Motor Efficiency	≥ 85%
Controller Rating	60 V, 35 A
Maximum Discharge Current	35 A (continuous)
Charging System	70 V, 6 A (CC–CV)
Charging Time	5–6 hours
Vehicle Kerb Weight	~78 kg
Maximum Load Capacity	150 kg

The experimental evaluation of the fabricated electric two-wheeler demonstrates the effectiveness of integrating regenerative braking within a low-power electric mobility platform. The results indicate that the regenerative braking system contributes significantly to overall energy efficiency. The energy recovery observed during testing lies in the range of 8–15%, which aligns with typical urban driving conditions characterized by frequent deceleration events. This recovered energy directly contributes to extending the operational range of the vehicle without increasing battery capacity.

The reverse-throttle mechanism provides a unique advantage in terms of rider-controlled braking intensity. Unlike conventional systems where regeneration is passive, this approach enables proportional control of braking force. However, it introduces a learning curve for riders unfamiliar with such control mechanisms. From a motor performance perspective, the BLDC hub motor exhibits high efficiency and smooth torque characteristics. The elimination of mechanical transmission components reduces energy losses and enhances reliability. The Hall sensor-based commutation ensures stable operation even at low speeds, which is critical for urban traffic conditions.

FIG. 1: FABRICATED ELECTRIC SCOOTER PROTOTYPE–FRONT THREE-QUARTER VIEW

The experimental validation of the developed electric two-wheeler demonstrates the practical feasibility of integrating regenerative braking within a compact and low-power mobility platform. The fabricated prototype, shown in Fig. 1 and Fig. 2, represents the successful realization of the proposed system, combining mechanical design, electrical integration, and control implementation into a single functional unit.

FIG.2: FABRICATED ELECTRIC SCOOTER PROTOTYPE–REAR THREE-QUARTER VIEW SHOWING HUB MOTOR

Fig. 1 illustrates the front three-quarter view of the fabricated electric scooter, highlighting the compact structural design, aerodynamic front profile, and integration of lighting and control elements. The step-through chassis configuration is clearly visible, which contributes to improved ergonomics and ease of rider access. The positioning of the front suspension and braking system ensures mechanical stability and effective load distribution during operation.

Fig. 2 presents the rear three-quarter view of the vehicle, where the BLDC hub motor integrated within the rear wheel can be observed. This configuration eliminates the need for mechanical transmission components such as chains or belts, thereby reducing mechanical losses and enhancing overall system efficiency. The placement of the motor within the wheel hub also contributes to a simplified drive train architecture and reduced maintenance requirements. The battery system demonstrates stable performance under both motoring and regenerative modes. The presence of a BMS ensures safe charging during regeneration, preventing over-voltage conditions. However, it is observed that regeneration effectiveness decreases when the battery approaches full charge due to safety constraints. Another important observation is that regenerative braking is less effective at very low speeds, as the generated back-EMF is insufficient to produce significant current. Therefore, mechanical braking remains essential for complete vehicle stoppage.

The system achieves a balance between efficiency, safety, and usability. The integration of regenerative braking does not compromise braking performance but instead enhances energy utilization and reduces wear on mechanical components

TABLE 2: PERFORMANCE EVALUATION AND REGENERATIVE BRAKING RESULTS

Performance Metric	Value
Top Speed	45–50 km/h
Energy Consumption	30 Wh/km
Range (Without Regeneration)	60 km
Energy Recovered	225 Wh per trip
Regeneration Efficiency	12.5%
Range (With Regeneration)	67.5 km
Range Improvement	+7.5 km (+12.5%)
Gradeability	15% incline at 25 km/h
Charging Efficiency	~85%
CO_2 Emission Reduction	~23 g/km (vs petrol scooter)

Table 2 highlights the key performance outcomes of the fabricated prototype, with particular emphasis on the impact of regenerative braking. The baseline energy consumption of 30 Wh/km results in a driving range of approximately 60 km for a full battery charge. However, with the integration of regenerative braking, an additional 225 Wh of energy is recovered during typical urban operation. This recovered energy translates into an extended range of 67.5 km, representing a 12.5% improvement in overall driving range. This result is significant, as it demonstrates that energy recovery can enhance performance without increasing battery capacity or system cost.

CONCLUSIONS:

This work presents the successful design, fabrication, and evaluation of a two-wheeler electric vehicle integrated with an active regenerative braking system. The developed prototype demonstrates that significant improvements in energy efficiency and vehicle range can be achieved without increasing battery capacity.

The experimental results confirm that regenerative braking can recover approximately 8–15% of energy, leading to an increase in driving range of up to 20%. The use of a BLDC hub motor, lithium-ion battery, and intelligent control strategy ensures efficient energy conversion and reliable operation. The proposed system offers a cost-effective and environmentally sustainable alternative to conventional petrol-powered vehicles. The integration of regenerative braking not only enhances efficiency but also reduces mechanical wear, thereby lowering maintenance requirements.

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