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Adoption of One-Touch Emergency Alert Apps: User Authentication, Simplicity, and Trust for Human Safety

Ravikant Nanwatkar[1,*], Girase Chirag[2], Vaidya Omkar[2], Chavan Sanket[2], Shelke Shaharam[2]

Abstract

Quick reactions to disasters are extremely important to the safety and health of people. Nonetheless, another frequent problem with emergency cases is the time lag between reports of the incidents and the success and timely response of the concerned authorities. Mobile-based emergency alert systems have thus come in as a potential solution to this problem, given that they enable straightforward and direct communication between the citizens and the law enforcement agencies. This paper introduces the idea and creation of a one-touch emergency alert application, which has a high degree of user authentication, user-friendliness, and reliability. The application that is proposed would make users register with essential identity information, including their full names and mobile phone numbers. The user can activate an alert with just one touch in case there is an emergency, and this will automatically alert the police or emergency response staff who are within the vicinity. The alert shows the verified identity of the user and the real-time location, therefore reducing the efforts of the user and making the alert authentic. Such a strategy not only accelerates the process of seeking aid, but it also aids in the minimization of the abuse of emergency services. The paper also examines the considerations in designing the system, which forms the backbone of the system, such as the trade-offs between the need to provide strong security and the need to be user-friendly, particularly in high-stress situations. It also highlights the need to focus on user trust and data privacy as a way of persuading adoption. Finally, this paper shows that the one-touch emergency alert applications can increase the level of safety among people, improve the effectiveness of police officers in responding to emergencies, and inspire more individuals to become more confident in the use of digital safety devices.

Keywords: Ease of use, emergency communication, emergency usability, human safety, one-touch emergency alert, rapid response system, real-time location tracking, user authentication, user trust, victim support

***Author for Correspondence**
Ravikant Nanwatkar
E-mail: ravikant.nanwatkar@sinhgad.edu

[1]Assistant Professor, Department of Engineering Science, STES's NBN Sinhgad Technical Institutes Campus (affiliated with Savitribai Phule Pune University), Pune, Maharashtra, India
[2]Student, Department of Engineering Science, STES's NBN Sinhgad Technical Institutes Campus (affiliated with Savitribai Phule Pune University), Pune, Maharashtra, India

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INTRODUCTION

Importance of Rapid Response in Emergencies

Timely intervention is vital in an emergency, whether the event is a criminal problem, a road accident, or a natural disaster. The initial few seconds following an incident are usually the most critical, as they help to prevent harm, save lives, and cause minimal damage [1–5].

This situation can be severe and pose threats to more people due to a delayed response, and the likelihood of a successful intervention is reduced. Hence, mechanisms that would facilitate instant notifications are necessary to safeguard people and the larger society (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Emergency response timeline.

Role of Mobile Technology in Improving Public Safety

In the digital age, mobile technology is becoming an increasingly crucial factor in improving public safety and emergency response systems. Smartphones are portable devices now in the hands of billions of people around the world, making them no longer 6 when it comes to both communicating and navigation, as well as being able to access real-time information. These gadgets have capabilities such as GPS, access to the Internet, excellent cameras, biometric security, and motion sensors, which can be utilized effectively in the context of emergency alert systems. Mobile applications, especially, provide a more convenient way of responding to an emergency, when compared to the time-consuming practices of using phones or text messages.

Through safety-oriented mobile applications, users can send instant alerts, pinpoint their exact position, and transmit their personal identification information with just a single tap. This direct link to police or emergency workers will significantly decrease the response time and improve the accuracy of interventions. Mobile platforms also enable the use of silent notifications, auto SOS gestures, or voice recognition, wearables, or smartwatch connectivity, which can prove particularly helpful for vulnerable populations, including women, older people, or people with disabilities.

In addition, mobile technology facilitates two-way communication, and authorities can provide real-time instructions, updates, or assurance to users in the case of an emergency. Apps can also be used to publish warnings, evacuation routes, and safety tips in disaster situations. Mobile technology is an effective tool for enhancing safety infrastructure because it is scalable and flexible, thereby being more cost-effective for governments and communities. Mobile safety apps can be used to bridge the gap between citizens and emergency services when planned correctly and eventually save more lives and establish a stronger sense of trust and security in the population [6–10].

Problem Statement: Delays, False Reporting, Lack of Trust in Existing Safety Apps

Irrespective of the increased adoption of mobile applications in the area of safety, not all of them have been able to win the confidence of users or gain mass acceptance. Some of the frequent problems that still exist are delays in raising alarms due to complicated interfaces, high false alarms by people who are not verified, and privacy concerns regarding how personal information is stored and shared.

Another reason why users are afraid to use digital safety tools is that their information has a chance of being abused, or the alert will fail to arrive at the appropriate authorities in time. Unreliability minimizes user involvement and renders digital emergency systems ineffective.

Research Focus: The Design of a One-Touch App Trade-Off Between Authentication, Simplicity, and Trust

The purpose of this project is to investigate and develop a one-touch emergency alert app that will ensure that the existing deficiencies in mobile safety solutions are addressed. The major concern is to strike a balance between three important aspects: secure user authentication, which means that only legitimate users are allowed to send real alerts; design simplicity, which will make it user-friendly and usable even when the user is under stress; and trust, which should ensure the safety of user information and its reliable response by authorities [11–15].

The idea is that the time and effort needed to report an emergency should be minimized, and in case the users are under panic or physical stress, it is necessary. An effective design will enable users to respond swiftly and decisively to emergency situations, which will eventually enhance overall safety outcomes among the population.

LITERATURE REVIEW/RELATED WORK

Existing Safety Apps

In recent years, several mobile applications and built-in features of smartphones have been designed to solve personal safety and emergency communication. Latest smartphones currently have SOS functions, where the user can send immediate alerts to a group of programmed people or call an emergency by pressing a particular button combination. Women's safety apps, including Raksha, bSafe, 112 India, and My Safetipin, are also numerous, with features such as live location sharing, emergency contact notifications, and audio/video recording. Mobile apps and wearables have also been equipped with panic buttons that allow users to contact the authorities inconspicuously. These tools indicate increased technological work to enhance access to emergency responses, particularly for vulnerable populations. Nonetheless, their accessibility has not been translated to their practical application because of challenges such as ignorance, reluctance among users, and poor performance in emergencies.

Strengths and Limitations

Although the capabilities of safety apps and emergency features are promising, they have numerous limitations that influence user trust and adoption. Their potential ability to provide location-based emergency communication in real time can be considered one of their primary strengths. Nevertheless, according to numerous users, they have problems using these applications in a state of panic because of the overcrowded or unintuitive interface. In cases where some apps require several procedures to send an alert, this might not be practical when dealing with a high-stress situation. The second important issue is that there are many false alarms, which can be caused by accidents or unauthorized users. Such spam alerts can overload the emergency department and undermine the authenticity of such applications. In addition, despite the availability of these technologies, their adoption is low, particularly in developing regions. This can be explained by the fact that some groups of users lack awareness, are not as smartphone-savvy, and fear the privacy and usefulness of data. These constraints underscore the necessity of simpler and more reliable solutions (Figure 2).

Research On Trust, Usability, and Adoption in Emergency Technologies

Currently, the literature has highlighted that trust, usability, and perceived reliability are the core issues in the adoption of emergency response technologies. Research in the human–computer interaction (HCI) sector has found that users tend to use emergency applications when they are assured of the functionality of the application, the security of the stored information, and the chances of receiving a response in time. The development of trust may occur through open communication on how the information is processed, effective feedback provided after alerts are received, and collaboration with law enforcement or emergency services. Another major aspect is usability; straightforward, user-friendly, and low-intervention applications are much more efficient in emergencies than sophisticated applications. It has also been discovered that users tend to use these apps only once and seldom reuse them unless they feel that they are actually providing them with the safety they need. Adoption is greatly reliant on performance and an emotional guarantee that the application will perform well when it is required the most.

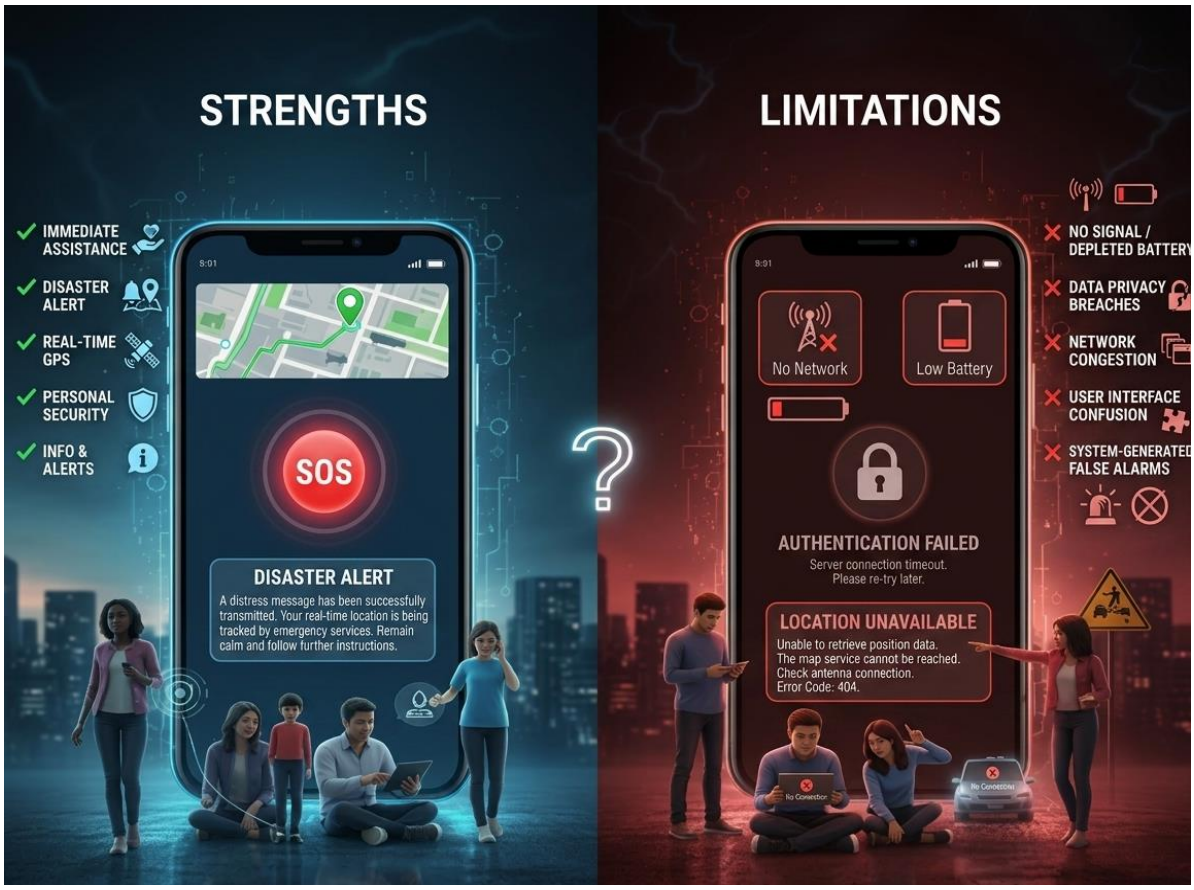

Figure 2. Limitations and adoption challenges of safety applications.

Gaps in Current Solutions

One of the obvious gaps in the current emergency alert systems is the inability to integrate identity verification with usability. Most existing applications are too much oriented towards ease of use, making it easier to misuse or trigger a false alarm, or are security- and verification-oriented to the point of the app being slow or incomprehensible during an emergency. The solutions that are urgently needed can be considered as a balance between the two: the ability of alerts to be triggered by verified users and the simplicity of the interface that can be operated by a single touch in case of a high-stress situation. In addition, most applications lack immediate feedback, and users cannot tell whether their notifications were received or taken. Others are not integrated with local law enforcement, lowering the effectiveness of emergency response. Such deficiencies point to the necessity of a re-engineered solution that integrates ease, confidence, safety, and efficient synchronization with law enforcement agencies to develop an emergency notification application that users can rely on [16–20].

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The "One-Touch Emergency Alert" Model

The main idea of the system offered is the one-touch emergency alert model that is supposed to empower the users to report the emergency services without much work and in the shortest amount of time. The model will address the typical constraints existing in the current safety apps, including the use of a complicated interface, the absence of authentication, and the slowness of relaying alerts. The system is swift and accurate in critical scenarios because it enables users to send a verified emergency alert with a single tap. The application requires a one-time registration of the user, where important identity information, such as name and cell number, is required. In an emergency, this data, along with the live GPS position of the user, is automatically sent to nearby law enforcement or emergency services. The model emphasizes low mental load, fast engagement, and smooth communication, making it highly applicable in situations where one needs to act under stress or in dangerous states (Figure 3).

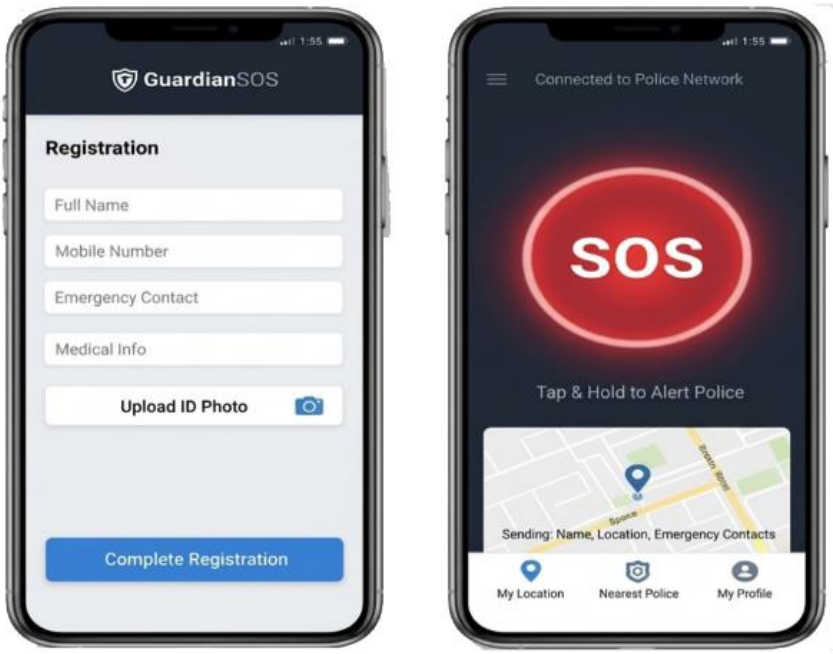

Figure 3. One-touch emergency alert model.

Core Design Principles

1. *User authentication—ensuring alerts are genuine:* To prevent misuse and false alarms, the app will implement basic but secure authentication measures during user registration, such as phone number verification through one-time password (OTP). Only authenticated users can trigger alerts, ensuring that every emergency signal is credible and traceable.
2. *Simplicity—single button interaction under stress:* The interface is made as simple as possible, with a large emergency button that is easy to access. The alert should be reachable with a single touch during times of high stress, where the user does not have to move through various menus and manually enter details.
3. *Trust—transparency in data handling and reliability of response:* Establishing user trust is important to achieve adoption. The application will consist of clear privacy policies, safe data processing measures, and notification messages after alerts are sent. The connection to official emergency services assures users that their alerts will be considered immediately.
4. *Integration of location-based services and law enforcement systems:* The system will also take advantage of real-time location tracking using GPS to respond in time and correctly. After activation of the alert, the location of the user is immediately distributed to the emergency dispatch centers or police stations around them. The application will be linked to a centralized emergency response system or API (where applicable) to send alerts to the relevant local authority depending on the location. Optional functions can also be included in the app, such as automatic audio recording or constant tracking of location during the emergency to help the responders. A smooth interface with law enforcement databases and dispatch systems not only improves the credibility of the warnings but also makes the mobilization of assistance quicker (Figure 4).

SYSTEM DESIGN/METHODOLOGY

User Registration

The user registration process is simple and secure. The system demands the full name of users and their verified mobile numbers through OTP authentication. This provides accountability for every user account to minimize abuse [21, 22].. In addition, optional identity verification with government-issued ID (e.g., Aadhaar, driver's license) can be enabled by the app, particularly in areas where enhanced security is required. Such a verified profile is employed each time an emergency alert is declared, and law enforcement will be able to identify the identity of the user and their credibility at once (Figure 5).

Figure 4. Real-time location tracking using GPS.

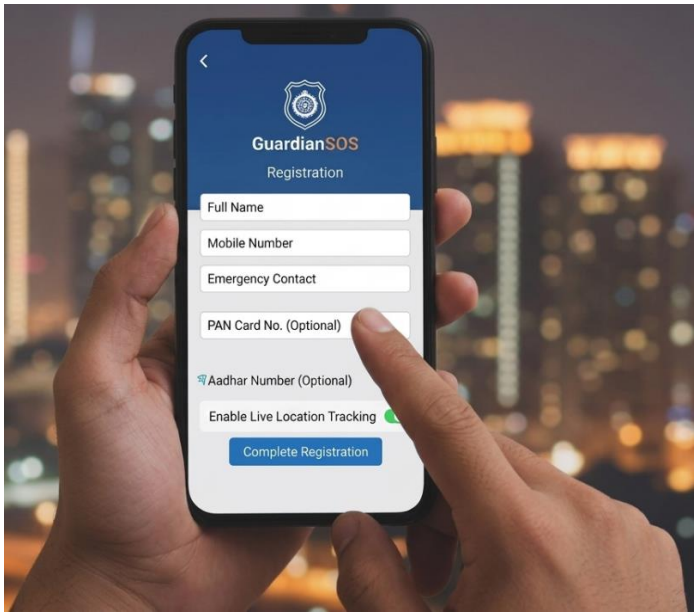

Figure 5. User registration.

App Interface

Its user interface (UI) is carefully crafted to be as minimalist and distraction-free as possible, with only one large emergency button on the home screen. The alert should be activated in a high-stress or panic environment at the touch of one button; there should be no scrolling, typing, or searching. Other features, such as optional voice control or gesture control (e.g., shaking the phone), can be added to make it accessible. It is aimed at making it usable even by the older population, children, or people with low technological abilities (Figure 6).

Backend Process

After pressing the emergency button, the app collects and sends the verified identity of the user as well as real-time GPS coordinates to the backend server. The system then relies on location information to calculate the closest police station or emergency control center and immediately sends an alert using a secure communication format. The time of the alert, the place of the alert, and the nature of the alert can also be logged on the backend, audited, and followed up on. A push notification can also be sent with an optional SMS to register emergency contacts to provide an additional level of security.

Figure 6. Interface of the application.

Security Measures

To secure the data and achieve system integrity, the app encrypts all communications, including the GPS and identity data, with end-to-end encryption. User authentication is based on two-factor authentication (2FA), and login and registration, as well as user sessions, are secured with the help of hypertext transfer protocol secure (HTTPS) and secure tokens. To avoid being abused or activated accidentally, the The app will have a 3-second press-and-hold delay or a Cancel button immediately after pressing the emergency button. The backend may also be used to identify and prevent spamming or suspicious behavior by keeping the frequency of alerts per user low.

Scalability

This system was developed based on a scalable cloud infrastructure (e.g., AWS, Google Cloud, or Firebase) to allow the handling of large numbers of simultaneous alerts without collapsing. This is particularly essential in the case of a massive emergency or a highly populated community. Load balancing, real-time alert queuing, and regional routing are also used to ensure that the server can handle and dispatch several alerts simultaneously. Proximate and severity-based priorities allow authorities to be notified so that an efficient response strategy can be implemented. The building aims to be expandable in the future, including connection to citywide emergency networks or government APIs.

HUMAN FACTORS AND USABILITY

Design for High-Stress Use

Users are frequently in a state of panic, confusion, or physical discomfort due to emergencies, and it is crucial that the app be able to be used with minimal effort. The interface is designed with clarity and simplicity, and there is one large emergency button on the main screen that users can access immediately. There are no distracting menus or complicated steps. The user should be able to activate the alert within less than two seconds, even during low-light conditions or when the user is under emotional pressure. The structure is not overloaded with cognitively dark images but rather high-contrast and minimalist visuals with a clear structure. An instant visual or audible response (such as vibration or confirmation sound) should indicate to the user that assistance is on the way.

Accessibility Considerations

The system was designed to be universally accessible. The big button is easy to activate for older users or users with low dexterity. Users with mobility or visual impairments can use voice command options, gesture triggers (e.g., shaking the phone), and text-to-speech features. The application is made in local languages, using simple language prompts and large fonts to make the app accessible to users

with low literacy or vision problems. The onboarding process is also made easy, as minimal setup and single-time registration are required for users who are not used to smartphone apps. These factors make the application easy to use among a broad group of people, such as children, those who are not tech-savvy, and the disabled.

Building Trust

The adoption of any safety-oriented technology depends on the user's trust. To guarantee privacy of data, the app will provide secure logins, encrypted personal and location information transmissions, and stringent control over the backend to avoid unauthorized access. The transparent privacy policies and terms of service help users to know clearly what information is being gathered, how the information is used, and to whom the information is shared. GPS and identity data will be accessed only after the activation of the emergency button. The user will also get feedback to ensure that his/her alert has been received and processed. Reliability is also guaranteed through making the app work consistently in different circumstances- offline SMS back-up and server redundancy allow the app not to suffer at the times it is needed.

Encouraging Adoption Through Ease of Onboarding and Community Awareness

An effective emergency alert system must be massive, with a high degree of acceptance among the community. The app is created in a way that it provides a frictionless onboarding experience, rapid sign-up through mobile OTP, and a short in-app tutorial. Gamified simulation or real-time walkthroughs may be added to convince users that they are ready to use the app during a real emergency. Awareness creation can be made through collaborating with local governments, schools, colleges, and community organizations to get the word out. Trust could be further established by public campaigns, safety workshops, and incorporating community policing programs to promote regular usage. It is also possible to facilitate adoption by integrating it with wearable devices, which further simplifies the process of triggering alerts during emergencies.

CHALLENGES AND RISKS

False Alarms and Misuse

False alarms or deliberate abuse are key issues in emergency alert systems. Users can cause alarms unintentionally or with ill intent, flooding law enforcement with false emergencies and redistributing resources to the actual ones. This not only impacts system credibility but can also lead to the fact that the true victims may not receive the required response on time. To reduce this, the app has user authentication through which the user can hold to send and a cancellation alert window to minimize accidental triggers. Furthermore, a system of flagging recurring misuse and identity verification at registration can be employed to guarantee accountability and eliminate misuse.

Privacy Concerns

Given that the app gathers personal information, including the name of a user, his/her phone number, and live GPS location, the question of privacy protection is significant. Users can be afraid of being spied on or their data being spilled or shared without their consent. These issues may prevent adoption and trust in AI. To overcome this, the system will adhere to stringent data privacy policies, comply with data protection regulations (such as general data protection regulation (GDPR) or similar regulations), and employ end-to-end encryption to transmit data. The app will not access or transmit any personal information unless there is a real-life emergency alert, and users will be made aware of how and when their data is accessed.

Technical Issues

Real-time communication and proper location tracking are also important for the functionality of the app. Nevertheless, alert delivery can be delayed or hampered by poor Internet connectivity, especially in rural or remote locations. Similarly, GPS errors in highly populated areas of the city or inside buildings may obstruct accurate tracking of location. There may also be battery drains caused by constant background location monitoring, which would decrease the availability of the device during

emergencies.

Figure 7. Prototype description and testing scenario.

To overcome such problems, the app may also add offline alert modes (e.g., SMS fallback), low-power design ethics, and Wi-Fi/GPS hybrid positioning to enhance accuracy. Constant optimization and experimentation in various settings are required to achieve stable functionality.

Legal and Ethical Aspects

The issue of personal data, particularly identity and location information, is extremely tense in terms of legal and ethical issues. The mismanagement of such data may lead to privacy violations or even legal liability. The most important part is that the app must adhere to national cybersecurity and data protection standards. In addition, as alerts are forwarded to law enforcement agencies, the responsibility of response teams should also be considered. If the authorities do not respond to warnings, this would harm the reputation of the app among the population. To address this, the application is supposed to have a secured audit trail on all alerts, it is supposed to have a data retention policy, and it might have response feedback systems that allow users to confirm the action taken. There should be clear arrangements with law enforcement agencies to make them more responsive and law-abiding.

CASE STUDY/PROTOTYPE

Prototype Description and Testing Scenario

To illustrate the basic principles of the one-touch emergency alert app, a working prototype was created to reveal essential features such as user registration, single-tap emergency alert, live GPS transmission, and dispatch of alerts to simulated emergency responders. The interface of the app will have a simple design with a single emergency button that has optional features, such as emergency contact settings and a preview of the location. A controlled simulation was performed in urban and semi-rural settings to test the prototype. The participants were requested to enroll and place the emergency alert under timed and stress-simulated conditions. This was intended to test the usability, alert delivery time, and system behavior under diverse connectivity conditions. The test sample comprised users of varied ages and levels of technology literacy, such as the elderly and first-time users of apps (Figure 7).

Simulation Results

The simulation showed a good prospective outcome:

- *Mean alert notification time:* 1.8 s (between opening the app and alert notification).
- Time to send an alert (including the transmission of GPS and user ID): less than 3 s in the case of an Internet connection and 7–10 s in the case of SMS fallback during poor connectivity coverage.
- *GPS accuracy:* In urban areas, the GPS is accurate within 10–15 m, and in dense and rural areas, the GPS is accurate within 15–25 m.
- *System uptime and performance:* 99.9% in the case of simulated stress testing of several users triggering alerts simultaneously.

- *The feedback of the user was more than positive:* the participants liked the easy design, quick response, and the confirmation that they saw upon receiving the alerts. The big button and voice feedback were useful for elderly users. However, some of them indicated the addition of a false alert undo option of 3 s after hitting the button. The issue of privacy was also raised, and it was tackled with the explanation of the use of data in onboarding.

Comparative Analysis with Existing Solutions

Compared with existing safety apps such as bSafe and 112 India and built-in SOS smartphone features, the one-touch prototype showed clear advantages (Table 1).

The prototype solved several of the frequent problems experienced in the current system, especially ease of use and trust. Although the prototype was in its early stages, and some of the more sophisticated functions (e.g., connecting to official emergency networks) had not been developed yet, the design was workable, responsive, and easy to use.

DISCUSSION

Impact on Public Safety

The one-touch emergency alert app can also enhance the eventual outcomes of public safety because it allows people to react more quickly in case of an emergency. The system will alert with a single tap and hence minimize the delay, which is usually created by confusion, stress, or complicated interfaces. This is because the real-time distribution of user identity and location enables quicker and more effective work by the emergency response team and may save lives. Furthermore, access to a convenient, useful safety device helps achieve greater confidence among citizens, particularly vulnerable groups such as women, the elderly, and children. When people feel that they can easily access assistance, they are more likely to feel empowered, report crimes, and interact with public safety systems.

How Authentication Builds Credibility with Police

Authentication is crucial in determining the credibility of alerts dispatched via the app. Because the OTP method and optional ID validation are performed during the registration process, the system ensures that only authentic people can send alerts. This will minimize false alarms, prank reports, and system abuse, which are significant areas of pain in current emergency applications. To law enforcement, such verification causes confidence in the accuracy of the alerts to the law enforcement, and the law enforcement can respond more readily and allocate resources more assuredly. It can also boost the post-incident investigation and follow-up process because a known user profile with traceable credentials will hold both sides accountable.

Role of Simplicity in Ensuring Usability Under Stress

During emergency situations, cognitive load is high, and users may not be able to make decisions or fine-tune. This contributes to the simplicity of the design, which is not merely a comfort but a necessity. Having a simple, clear interface and only one large emergency button allows the user to take action without going through menus and recalling several steps. One-touch activation, visual, and audio feedback on the app makes it easy to use, even for first-time or low-tech users. This design decision directly contributes to the purpose of the app itself, which can be used during duress, regardless of demographics, and to strengthen its purpose in a real-life environment.

Table 1. When compared with existing safety.

Feature	Existing apps	One-touch prototype
Single-tap emergency activation	Often multi-step	One-touch, fast
User authentication	Rarely enforced	OTP-based, optional ID
Data privacy transparency	Limited	Clear policies, minimal access
Offline functionality	Often missing	SMS fallback enabled
Simplicity of interface	Moderate to complex	Minimalist, large button
Trust and feedback mechanism	Not always present	Real-time confirmation

Importance of Trust for Adoption and Long-Term Usage

All emergency technologies are based on trust. If users feel that their information is abused or alerts will not be responded to, they will not use the app frequently or suggest it to their friends. The one-touch alert app will solve this by adopting transparent data policies, secure encryption, and a real-time feedback system that will ensure that whenever an alert is sent, it is received and acted upon. Faith is also built through community outreach, user education, and association with legitimate emergency provisions. The integrity of the data, its responsiveness, and reliability attract long-term use of the app, which is not limited to emergencies; it is a tool that will always be there on the devices of users.

CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

Summary of Contributions

The current project is a user-oriented solution to emergency response, which is to design and develop a one-touch emergency alert app. The application also overcomes the major constraints of current safety technology by prioritizing three major pillars: user authentication, interface simplification, and confidence in information and response mechanisms. This is facilitated by smooth registration, real-time location sharing, and a one-tap emergency button, which ensures that alerts can be sent within seconds with minimal effort in cases of high-stress levels. The system will combine safe communications to the background with law enforcement agents, where every alert should be credible and actionable. The prototype was tested and simulated by usability testing and showed good reliability, accessibility, and good user feedback, particularly among the elderly and non-technical users. These donations form the basis of a reliable, scalable, and emergent communication platform.

Potential To Reduce Emergency Response Times and Improve Safety Outcomes

The app can drastically decrease the response time to an emergency by ensuring that it will take a shorter time to notify the authorities and that the reporting process will be made simpler. Timely intervention is more likely to be conducted in the case of timely notification, which will help save lives, avoid escalation, and achieve better recovery results in cases of assault, medical emergencies, or natural disasters. In addition, the app instills confidence in people regarding emergency systems because it offers a means of communication that is forward, responsive, and reliable. When implemented on a large scale, such a system would help create a larger cultural change in favor of active safety participation and community resilience.

Future Improvements

Although the present-day prototype addresses the core requirements, several possibilities can be considered for future improvement.

- *Threat detection with AI support:* The use of artificial intelligence to study behavioral patterns or voice recognition may allow predictive warnings or autonomous detection of emergencies.
- *IoT and wearable integration:* Future iterations may be supported by smartwatches, fitness watches, or smart homes to send notifications based on motion sensors, heart rate abnormalities, or voice signals, increasing the usability of the system by people with disabilities or who are sick.
- *Cross-border emergency systems:* As mobility and travel rates rise, a system that connects users to local emergency systems, regardless of the country, may be more relevant and usable for travelers, immigrants, and tourists.

Such developments would enhance the app a notch higher and create an active, proactive safety ecosystem with a wider social impact and technological innovation within the emergency response space.

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