



International Journal of Innovative Research in Science Engineering and Technology (IJIRSET)

(A Monthly, Peer Reviewed, Refereed, Scholarly Indexed, Open Access Journal)



Impact Factor: 8.699

Volume 14, Issue 5, May 2025

Mobile App for Direct Access for Farmers

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ABSTRACT: The agricultural sector in many developing countries faces persistent challenges, including lack of direct market access, limited information dissemination, and dependence on intermediaries. To address these issues, this paper presents the development and implementation of a mobile application designed to provide direct access for farmers to critical agricultural resources and markets. By leveraging mobile technology and localized language support, the app empowers farmers to make informed decisions, improve crop yield, and increase profitability by reducing middlemen intervention. The paper also discusses the system architecture, user interface design, and usability testing conducted among a sample of rural farmers. Results indicate significant improvements in market participation and access to timely agricultural information. This solution demonstrates the potential of mobile ICT (Information and Communication Technology) tools in bridging the digital divide in agriculture and promoting sustainable rural development.

KEYWORDS: Mobile Agriculture, ICT for Development, Farmer Empowerment, e-Agriculture, Digital Marketplaces, Smart Farming

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture continues to be the primary source of livelihood for a substantial portion of the global population, especially in developing countries such as India, where over 58% of the population depends on farming for sustenance and income [1]. Despite the sector's critical importance, farmers—particularly small and marginal landholders—face several persistent challenges, including lack of access to real-time information, limited market connectivity, dependency on intermediaries, and poor awareness of government schemes and subsidies.

The traditional agricultural supply chain often results in reduced profits for farmers due to the presence of multiple intermediaries, price fluctuations, and delayed access to critical advisories such as pest alerts, weather forecasts, and market prices. In this context, mobile technology has emerged as a transformative tool that can bridge the gap between rural farming communities and vital agricultural information. With increasing mobile phone penetration and growing digital literacy among rural populations, mobile-based solutions have the potential to enhance agricultural productivity, efficiency, and profitability.

This paper introduces a mobile application, AgriConnect, developed with the objective of providing direct access for farmers and also features such as localized weather updates, expert crop advisory, direct access to a digital marketplace, and notifications related to government policies and financial support programs. Designed with a user-centric approach, the application supports regional languages and offers an intuitive interface to ensure accessibility for users with varying levels of literacy and technical proficiency.environment. That's where sustainable fertilizer optimization comes

in. It's a smarter way to farm—using technology to figure out the best type and amount of fertilizer for each crop, based on real-time data from the soil, weather, and previous .

The goal of the proposed system is to empower farmers with timely, accurate, and actionable information, enabling them to make informed decisions, minimize dependency on intermediaries, and improve their economic outcomes.

II. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Farmers, especially those in rural and remote areas, often struggle with limited access to timely agricultural information, market prices, expert guidance, and government schemes. Existing mobile applications tend to focus on isolated features, lack support for regional languages, and require stable internet connections—factors that exclude many smallholder farmers. Additionally, dependence on middlemen for selling produce leads to unfair pricing and reduced income. This creates a critical need for a comprehensive, user-friendly mobile application that integrates essential farming services and enables direct access to markets and resources, ultimately empowering farmers to make informed decisions and improve their productivity and livelihoods.

One of the major pain points in traditional and even digital marketplaces is the lack of trust between producers and buyers, especially concerning payments and produce quality. Farmers frequently face delayed or insecure payments, while consumers worry about the authenticity and freshness of the products. Without proper systems for verification, ratings, and secure transactions, trust cannot be established at scale. A solution is needed that not only connects farmers and consumers directly but also builds a trustworthy transaction environment through integrated payment gateways, verified profiles, and transparent feedback mechanisms.

The agricultural sector is plagued by long-standing issues such as price exploitation by middlemen, lack of direct market access for farmers, inadequate use of digital tools, and inefficiencies in the farm-to-consumer supply chain. Consumers, meanwhile, demand better transparency, traceability, and quality in food sourcing. Although digital solutions exist, they often fall short in meeting the combined needs of accessibility, usability, scalability, and trust. There is a pressing need for a unified digital platform that empowers farmers to reach consumers directly through a secure, multilingual, and feature-rich eCommerce application.

III. LITERATURE REVIEW

1. Author : Mishra et al.

a. Title: Evaluation of the eNAM Platform for Agricultural Commodities

b. Outcome: The study assesses the eNAM (National Agriculture Market) platform, designed to unify agricultural trading across India. It enhances price transparency and minimizes the role of intermediaries in the trading process.

c. Disadvantage: The system's dependency on digital literacy and reliable internet access poses a significant challenge for smallholder farmers, especially in remote areas.

2. Author : Singh & Verma

a. Title: Mobile-Based Crop Disease Detection Using Image Processing

b. Outcome: This research introduces a mobile solution for identifying crop diseases through image analysis. It demonstrated good accuracy for major crops and showed promise in aiding early disease detection.

c. Disadvantage: The system lacks real-time expert support and integration with market data, reducing its effectiveness in real-world agricultural decision-making.

3. Author : Chikankar, Kotecha & Deshmukh

a. Title: M-Kisan: An SMS-Based Expert System for Crop Recommendations

b. Outcome: The M-Kisan system delivers localized crop recommendations via SMS, helping farmers make informed decisions.

c. Disadvantage: Its reliance on text messaging limits its ability to deliver rich media content like images or videos, reducing usability for less literate users.

4.Author : Gichamba & Lukandu

a. Title: Analyzing the iCow Mobile Platform for Livestock Management in Kenya

b. Outcome: The study investigates iCow, an SMS-based service providing livestock management guidance. The platform emphasizes simplicity and local language support for ease of adoption.

c. Disadvantage: The simplicity of the SMS interface may constrain the depth and variety of advice delivered, especially for more complex queries.

5.Author : Thompson et al.

a. Title: Evaluation of FarmLogs in Large-Scale Farming Operations

b. Outcome: FarmLogs supports tech-savvy farmers with tools for tracking yields, weather, and records. It is well-received among commercial farmers in the U.S.

c. Disadvantage: The platform's design and cost structure make it unsuitable for small-scale or low-resource farmers in developing regions.

6.Author : Mittal & Tripathi

a. Title: Impact of Mobile Phone Usage on Small Farm Productivity in India

b. Outcome: Mobile phones enable better crop decisions by providing access to real-time market prices and expert inputs.

c. Disadvantage: Rural challenges such as poor network coverage and device affordability hinder widespread impact.

7.Author : Balaji, Meera & Dixit

a. Title: e-Sagu: ICT-Based Personalized Crop Advisory System

b. Outcome: e-Sagu offers detailed, expert-generated agricultural advice using digital platforms, leading to improved farming practices.

c. Disadvantage: The dependence on field operators and limited two-way communication with farmers restricts scalability and responsiveness.

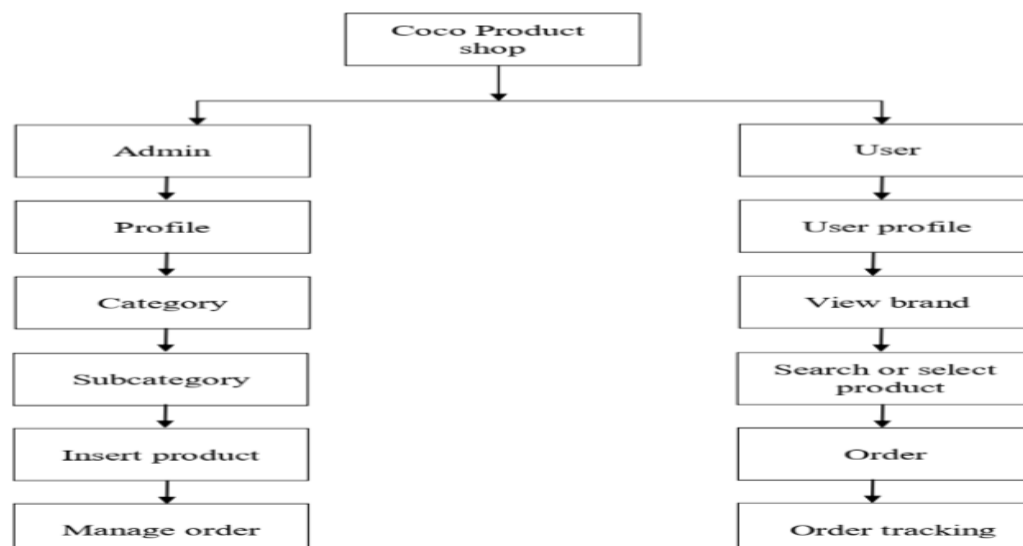
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IV. DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION



The data flow diagram (DFD) for the Mobile App for Direct Market Access for Farmers demonstrates how data moves through the system to facilitate direct communication and transactions between farmers and buyers. The process begins when a farmer or buyer interacts with the app's frontend interface, entering details such as crop information, quantity, and pricing preferences. This data is then sent to the backend system, where it is processed and stored in a database, typically using technologies like MySQL. The backend also handles matching buyers and sellers based on the entered criteria, ensuring that relevant offers and demands are connected efficiently. Once the matching is done, the system sends notifications or updates back to the frontend, where farmers and buyers can view potential matches, negotiate prices, and confirm transactions.

The Modular Architecture

Frontend Interfaces: These include the web-based user interface accessible via browsers and the React Native mobile application available on Android and iOS devices. Both interfaces provide user-friendly, intuitive, and responsive designs to accommodate the diverse user base — farmers, consumers, and administrators. The frontend is responsible for rendering dynamic content, capturing user inputs, and displaying real-time updates such as product availability and order status.

Backend Logic and APIs: The backend is implemented using PHP and follows a RESTful API design paradigm. This enables seamless communication between the frontend clients (web and mobile) and the server. The APIs handle core business logic such as user authentication, product management, order processing, payment verification, and role-based access control. RESTful services promote scalability by allowing multiple client types to interact with the server uniformly.

Database Management: The system uses MySQL as the relational database management system. The database schema is carefully normalized to reduce data redundancy and ensure data integrity. Key entities such as users, farmers, products, orders, payments, and reviews are structured with proper relationships and indexes to optimize query performance. This facilitates efficient data retrieval for operations and reporting.

Mobile Application Development: Using React Native, the mobile app provides native-like performance and a consistent user experience across platforms. The app interacts with backend RESTful APIs for all data transactions, enabling users to browse products, place orders, manage profiles, and receive notifications on the go. This approach reduces development time while supporting feature parity with the web portal.

User Authentication and Security

Security is paramount in the system design to protect sensitive user information and transaction data. The authentication mechanism utilizes secure session management where users log in using their credentials, and sessions are maintained with proper timeout and renewal policies to prevent unauthorized access. Passwords are stored in the database using robust hashing algorithms combined with salts to safeguard against data breaches. Additionally, role-based access control ensures that users can only access functionalities pertinent to their roles, preventing privilege escalation. hyperparameters are fine-tuned to maximize performance. The model may also be customized to weigh environmental factors more heavily, ensuring that recommendations are both yield-efficient and sustainable.

Database Schema and Data Normalization

The database is designed with normalization principles applied up to the third normal form (3NF) to avoid data anomalies and maintain consistency. Entities are defined as follows:

User Entity: Contains details such as user ID, name, email, hashed password, role (admin, farmer, user), contact information, and registration date.

Product Entity: Stores product ID, farmer ID (foreign key), product name, description, quantity, price, category (approved/pending), and timestamps. (e.g., tomato, onion), status

Order Entity: Tracks order ID, user ID, product ID(s), quantity, total amount, order status, payment status, and timestamps.

Payment Entity: Records payment transactions linked to orders, including payment ID, order ID, payment method (Razorpay), transaction status, and timestamps.

Integration and Workflow

The database is designed with normalization principles applied up to the third normal form (3NF) to avoid data anomalies and maintain consistency. Entities are defined as follows:

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Scalability and Maintainability

The modular design facilitates scalability by allowing individual components to be upgraded or expanded independently. For example, the backend can be extended to support additional payment gateways or delivery tracking without affecting the frontend. Similarly, the React Native app can incorporate new features or UI enhancements without backend modifications. Clear API contracts and database normalization support maintainability by making the codebase easier to understand and modify.

The implementation phase marks the transition from design to a functioning system, involving the setup of the development environment, coding, integration of components, and rigorous testing to ensure the platform operates as intended across all user roles.

Development Environment Setup

The backend server environment was configured using the widely adopted LAMP stack — Linux, Apache, MySQL, and PHP — providing a robust, scalable foundation for web application deployment. Apache served as the HTTP web server, PHP powered the server side scripting, and MySQL managed the relational database. This combination ensured efficient handling of API requests, database transactions, and security protocols.

For mobile app development, the React Native CLI was utilized, enabling cross-platform native app development for both Android and iOS devices. React Native was chosen for its ability to deliver near-native performance and streamline the development process by sharing codebases between platforms.

Frontend Development

The web frontend was developed using HTML5, CSS3, and JavaScript, adhering to modern responsive design principles to ensure compatibility across desktops, tablets, and smartphones. CSS frameworks such as Bootstrap were incorporated to accelerate UI development and maintain a consistent visual style. JavaScript was used to add dynamic behavior to the web pages, including form validations, interactive product galleries, and asynchronous requests to the backend via AJAX. The React Native mobile app mirrored the core functionalities of the web interface, offering an intuitive and seamless user experience. The app provided real-time product browsing, cart management, user profile editing, and push notifications to keep users informed about order status and promotional offers.

Backend and API Development

The backend RESTful APIs were developed using PHP to handle key functionalities such as user registration and authentication, product management by farmers, order processing by users, and administrative controls. Endpoints were secured to restrict access based on user roles, leveraging token-based authentication and session management. Special attention was paid to database interactions to maintain data integrity and optimize performance.

Payment Gateway Integration

One of the critical components of the system was the integration of the Razorpay SDK to enable secure and seamless online payments. Razorpay was selected due to its widespread acceptance, ease of integration, and support for multiple payment methods including credit/debit cards, UPI, and mobile wallets.

Testing and Validation

Comprehensive testing was conducted to validate the system's functionalities and workflows. Different user roles Admin, Farmer, and User were simulated to verify access controls, data consistency, and user interface behavior.

Functional Testing: Verified key features such as product upload and approval, browsing and searching products, order placement, payment processing, and profile management.

Usability Testing: Ensured that the interfaces were intuitive, responsive, and accessible on various devices.

Security Testing: Included verification of secure password storage, session management, and safe handling of payment data.

Deployment and Maintenance

After successful testing, the application was deployed on a live server with necessary configurations for domain, SSL certification for secure HTTPS access, and database backups. The React Native app was published on respective app stores with regular updates planned to enhance features and fix issues. The modular design supports ongoing maintenance and scaling as user base and transaction volume grow, ensuring long-term sustainability of the platform.

V. CONCLUSION

This project successfully developed a comprehensive ecommerce platform designed to bridge the gap between farmers and consumers by facilitating direct sales of fresh, organic produce. By eliminating intermediaries, the system empowers farmers with improved market access, enabling them to retain fair profit margins while providing consumers with healthy, affordable food options.

Leveraging modern web and mobile technologies such as PHP, MySQL, JavaScript, and React Native, the platform delivers a scalable, secure, and user-friendly experience across all roles—Admin, Farmer, and User. The integration of secure payment processing through Razorpay ensures smooth financial transactions, enhancing trust and reliability.

Through careful system analysis, design, implementation, and rigorous testing, the platform meets critical business requirements while maintaining robust data integrity and responsive performance. The modular architecture and RESTful APIs enable easy future enhancements and maintenance.

Looking ahead, potential improvements include integrating delivery logistics to offer end-to-end supply chain solutions, deploying advanced analytics tools to provide farmers with actionable insights on sales trends and inventory management, and incorporating AI-driven personalized recommendations to enhance the consumer shopping experience.

Overall, this project lays a solid foundation for a sustainable, technology-enabled agricultural marketplace that fosters transparency, efficiency, and mutual benefit for farmers and consumers alike.

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