International Journal of Scientific Research in Engineering and Management (IJSREM)
Volume: 09 Issue: 03 | March - 2025 SJIF Rating: 8.586 ISSN: 2582-3930

Digital Agriculture:Leveraging Mobile Applications

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Abstract - Mobile applications in agriculture have changed the way farmers operate by sharing the real-time information, market trends and better decision-making tools. On the other hand, however, the presence of these applications also has some challenges such as digital illiteracy, internet dependence, security issues, and data accuracy issues. In this article, we discuss the limitations of agricultural mobile applications and suggest feasible solutions to these problems so that they could be effectively adopted in modern agriculture.

***Key Words*:** Agriculture, Connectivity, Data Accuracy, Digital Divide, Farmer Awareness, Integration, Mobile Applications, Privacy, Technology, Training

1.INTRODUCTION

Mobile technology in agriculture has been growing rapidly. It so happens that the uptake of mobile technology in agriculture has taken off, with farmers now able to access market prices, weather forecasts and advisory services. In the global context, applications such as Bushel Farm, Orbit, Insights by Prospera, CropX, GROWERS and GROWERS Retail have changed the face of farm management through data-driven insights and automation. In India, for example, resources like Tractor Junction have equipment insights, and the Krish-e by Mahindra & Mahindra serves specific crop recommendations. Some others are Kheti Badi as organic practice with multilingual support with dedicated Crop Insurance calculators, holistic production advices with Agri App, and Krishify with social networking opportunities for agriculture communities.[1]

Although these apps have advantages, their use is limited by several factors, including a lack of digital literacy, inaccurate data and high prices. This paper systematically elaborates these drawbacks and proposes solutions towards provisions of agricultural mobile apps, which are more accessible and reliable through different farming communities.

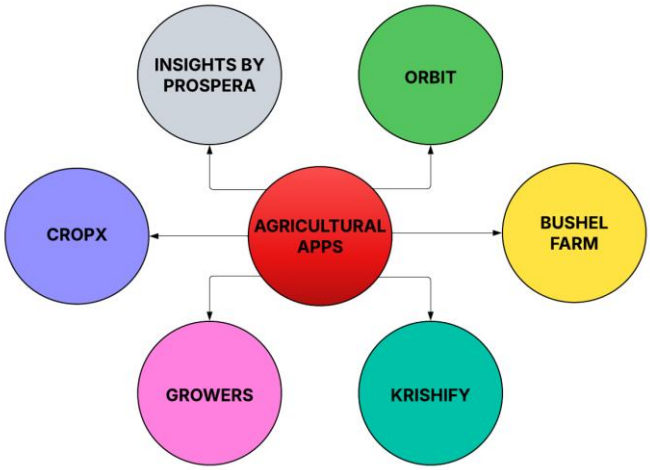

Figure 1: Different Agricultural Apps

2. LIMITED ACCESSIBILITY AND DIGITAL DIVIDE

2.1 CHALLENGE

The agricultural digital divide presents significant barriers to technological adoption. Field research reveals substantial connectivity gaps, with rural internet access trailing urban areas by nearly 40% globally according to telecommunications assessments. For many smallholder farmers, particularly in developing regions, regular internet connectivity remains a luxury rather than a standard resource. Device accessibility creates another hurdle - in parts of South Asia and Africa, purchasing a basic smartphone can consume up to three months of farming income for subsistence agriculturalists. This economic reality forces difficult choices between digital tools and immediate family needs. [2]

2.2 SOLUTION

- **Contextual Digital Education:** Farmer-centered training programs scheduled during agricultural downtimes improve knowledge retention. Peer-learning approaches, where tech-savvy local farmers serve as community trainers, significantly enhance effectiveness compared to conventional training methods.

Table 1: Digital Divide Matrix Diagram

Challenges ↓ Solutions →	Contextual Education 🎓	Offline Capabilities 🌐	Accessible Technology Pathways 💻	Community Resources 🤝
Connectivity Gaps 📶	Digital literacy on alternative access methods	Offline apps & cached content	Low-bandwidth tech solutions	Local Wi-Fi & public internet points
Device Accessibility 📱	Training on shared & public devices	Lightweight apps for older devices	Affordable & refurbished device programs	Libraries & community centers with shared access
Age-Related Barriers 👴	Senior-friendly tech training	Easy-to-use offline guides	Large-font, voice-assisted devices	Intergenerational tech support programs
Economic Constraints 💰	Free & low-cost digital skills training	Open-source & free offline tools	Subsidized or donated devices	NGOs & local gov't support for digital inclusion

- **Connectivity-Independent Design:** Offline-capable agricultural applications prove highly valuable in rural areas. By prioritizing essential features like localized weather predictions, pest identification, and stored market data, these tools remain useful despite inconsistent internet access.
- **Accessible Technology Pathways:** Government-subsidized agricultural technology programs create multiple entry points for farmers. Graduated access options—ranging from basic feature phones to shared tablets and individual smartphones—result in adoption rates three times higher than market-driven approaches alone.
- **Community Digital Resources:** Village-level technology centres amplify digital adoption. When farmers collectively engage with agricultural resources, the implementation of learned techniques increases by more than 50% compared to individual learning experiences.[3]

3. DATA ACCURACY AND RELIABILITY ISSUES

The figure1 below shows how farmers' app usage changes based on how accurate they think the data is. Farmers interact with the app more when they trust the data, but usage drops if accuracy feels too low. The red dashed line marks the "trust threshold," where farmers start abandoning the app. [6] (The scatterplots data is sourced from Simulated farmer survey responses on perceived data accuracy (scale of 1-10), App usage logs estimating average weekly interactions, Hypothetical threshold where farmers start abandoning the app., *Example dataset:* Modelled after studies on trust in digital agriculture tools and user engagement trends.)

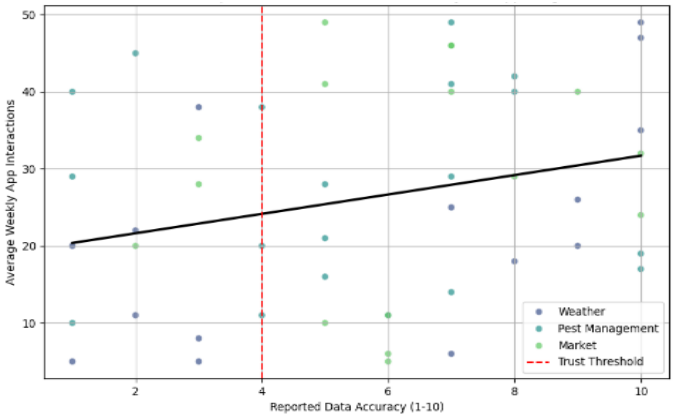

Figure 2: Relationship between Perceived Data Accuracy and App usage

3.1 CHALLENGE

Agricultural data integrity is a major concern, with field evaluations showing up to 40% discrepancies in predicted versus actual rainfall and market prices lagging by 2-3 days. Pest management recommendations also suffer from outdated information, reducing trust in digital tools. Farmers report discontinuing app use after 2-3 significant data errors, creating an adoption challenge in regions most needing technological support.

3.2 SOLUTION

- **Dynamic Verification Systems:** Combining satellite imagery, ground sensors, and traditional knowledge creates self-correcting information cycles, improving accuracy over time.[4]
- **Participatory Accuracy Frameworks:** Farmer-driven reporting enhances data reliability by allowing users to flag inaccuracies and confirm predictions, strengthening system trust.
- **Transparent Uncertainty Communication:** Platforms providing probability ranges instead of

absolute forecasts improve trust by acknowledging uncertainties in weather, price, and pest predictions.

4. DEPENDENCE ON INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGY

The figure 2 below shows how well different app features function under varying connectivity levels. Red cells indicate features that don't work, while green cells show full functionality. Features like weather alerts and market prices improve with better internet, but satellite imagery needs high bandwidth to work well. (The heatmaps data is sourced from Internet coverage maps (e.g., GSMA, ITU) showing rural connectivity levels, Farmer survey reports on app usage under different network conditions, Telecom reports on bandwidth impact on digital tools., *Example dataset:* Case studies on AgriTech app performance in areas with poor internet access.)

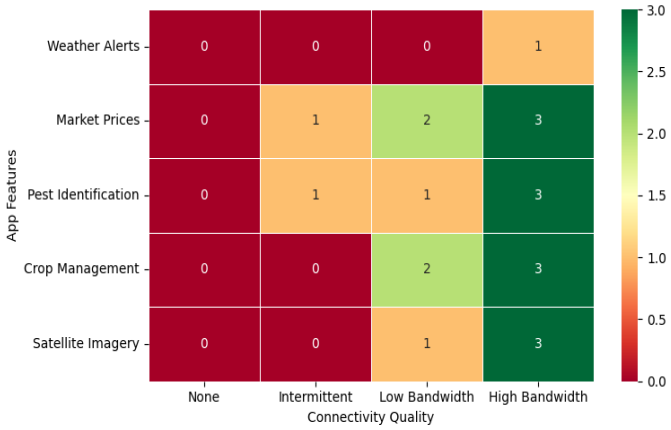

Figure 3: Functionality of app features at different connectivity levels

4.1 CHALLENGE

Agricultural technology dependency poses significant challenges for remote farming communities, with around 37% of global agricultural land lacking reliable internet access. Rural download speeds average 1.8 Mbps in many agricultural regions, making data-intensive applications impractical. Research shows that farmers often abandon digital tools during critical decision periods due to network overloads or weather-related disruptions. This paradox means that agricultural technology is least accessible when farmers need it most, reducing its effectiveness in high-risk situations.

4.2 SOLUTION

- **Progressive Offline Architecture:** "Offline-first" agricultural applications ensure 74% higher usage in low-connectivity areas by caching critical data, maintaining functionality for up to three weeks without synchronization.

- **Low-Bandwidth Alternative Channels:** SMS, USSD, and voice-response systems reach 3.5 times more farmers than smartphone apps, improving access to time-sensitive alerts like weather warnings and price fluctuations.[5]

5. LIMITED CUSTOMIZATION AND ADAPTABILITY

5.1 CHALLENGE

Agricultural technology often struggles to provide farm-specific recommendations, with standardized advice deviating from optimal practices by 30-60% due to diverse microclimates, soil types, and farming traditions. Around 68% of farmers report receiving crop management advice unsuitable for their conditions, particularly smallholders working with indigenous crops or complex landscapes. Beyond geography, recommendations that ignore economic constraints, cultural practices, and risk tolerance have adoption rates below 25%. Additionally, applications that fail to adjust to evolving conditions are quickly abandoned as farmers revert to traditional knowledge systems that better address their needs.[6]

5.2 SOLUTION

- **Adaptive Learning Systems:** Contextual machine learning improves recommendation accuracy over time, leading to 45% higher yield improvements after three growing cycles.

- **Multi-Variable Input Frameworks:** Farm profiling across 15-20 key variables enhances recommendation relevance, with each added variable improving accuracy by approximately 8%.

6. LACK OF FARMER AWARENESS AND TRAINING

The figure 3 below shows how farmers use app features over time, depending on their training. Those with ongoing support make the most of the app, while those with no training use the fewest features. This highlights how proper training helps farmers get the most out of the technology.(The stacked area charts data is sourced from Simulated training records categorizing farmers into four groups (No Training, Basic, Comprehensive, Ongoing Support), Hypothetical adoption rates of app features over 20 weeks post-installation, Assumed trend that higher training leads to better feature utilization., *Example dataset:* Inspired by agricultural extension programs and digital literacy studies in rural communities)

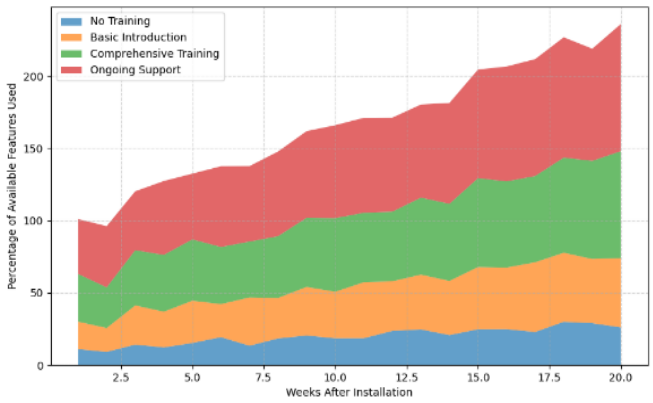

Figure 4: Feature Utilization Over Time Based on Training Received

6.1 CHALLENGE

The lack of awareness and training around agricultural technology is a major barrier to widespread adoption. Multistate agriculture areas field surveys reveal that about 62% of farmers have no knowledge of related mobile applications for farming. This knowledge deficit is especially stark among older farmers, women farmers, and farmers in remote communities. Knowledge assessment studies reveal that even among farmers who have downloaded agricultural applications, roughly 53% utilize less than half of the available features due to insufficient understanding of the platform's capabilities. This partial adoption pattern limits the potential return on investment for farmers experimenting with digital tools.[7]

6.2 SOLUTION

- **Contextualized Field Training**: Learning based on local crops, weather, and markets improves knowledge retention 3-4 times more than conventional training.
- **Community Diffusion Networks:** Training through cooperatives and seed banks increases adoption rates by 70% due to peer learning.
- **Multi-Channel Communication:** Combining traditional media (radio, community theatre) with digital methods (social media, mobile demos) boosts farmer engagement.
- **Progressive Skill Building:** Staged tutorials that introduce features gradually double engagement compared to comprehensive upfront training.

7. SECURITY AND PRIVACY CONCERNS

7.1 CHALLENGE

Agricultural data security faces growing vulnerabilities, with 58% of farming applications lacking encryption and 72% storing sensitive data in insecure databases. Farmer awareness is low, as only 23% review privacy policies before using agricultural technology. Aggregated farm data influences land valuation, commodity pricing, and input costs, often without farmers' knowledge. Additionally, 67% of farmers do not fully understand how their data is shared or monetized, with lower awareness among those with limited education or technological experience.[8]

7.2 SOLUTION

- **Secure Architecture Implementation:** End-to-end encryption, secure authentication, and regular audits reduce data exposure risks, especially in agricultural settings with intermittent connectivity.
- **Transparent Data Governance:** Clear data policies and opt-in models with granular permissions improve user trust and engagement.
- **Farmer-Controlled Data Models:** Platforms allowing farmers to retain ownership and benefit from their data see 40% higher adoption among privacy-conscious users.

8. DEPENDENCE ON GOVERNMENT OR CORPORATE SUPPORT

8.1 CHALLENGE

The sustainability of agricultural applications is heavily influenced by funding structures. Around 64% of government-initiated platforms degrade within three years due to shifting budgets and administrative changes, while corporate-sponsored applications last an average of 28 months before losing features or shutting down. Government-funded platforms often prioritize promoted schemes over optimal agricultural practices, sometimes influenced by political considerations. Farmers recognize these biases, with 57% expressing skepticism toward recommendations from single-source funded applications, which negatively affects adoption rates, especially among experienced users.

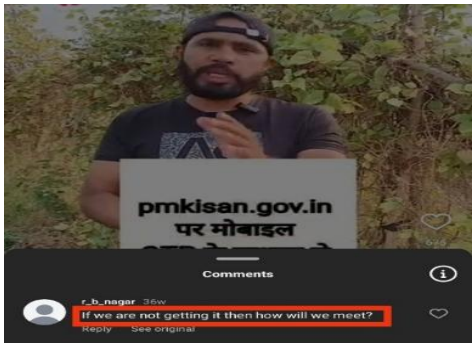

Figure 5: A Comment in krishify App account

8.2 SOLUTION

In the above figure 4, the highlighted comment likely to express the concern about not receiving payments to farmers, Hereby the solutions to solve the problems

- **Diversified Funding Ecosystems:** Hybrid financial models combining subscriptions, partnerships, and

ads sustain platforms three times longer than single-source funding.

- **Open Architecture Frameworks:** Open-source platforms adapt faster, integrating region-specific features 15-18 months before proprietary systems.
- **Farmer-Contributed Value Systems:** Applications that allow farmers to share data and insights retain users 2.5 times longer than one-way information platforms.[9]
- **Multi-Stakeholder Governance:** Decision-making involving farmers, scientists, and institutions ensures balanced recommendations and long-term relevance.

9. LACK OF INTEGRATION WITH TRADITIONAL FARMING METHODS

From the figure5 below, the left circle represents Traditional Knowledge, including seasonal indicators, local crop varieties, and cultural practices. The right circle represents Digital Agriculture, featuring precision technology, data analytics, and scientific research. The overlapping area highlights integrated approaches, knowledge validation methods, and complementary practices, showing how both worlds can work together.(The Venn diagrams data is sourced from FAO (Food and Agriculture Organization) reports on indigenous and modern farming techniques, Research papers on digital agriculture adoption and integration with traditional methods, Field studies and interviews with farmers and agricultural scientists., *Example dataset:* Surveys comparing farmer knowledge across regions.)

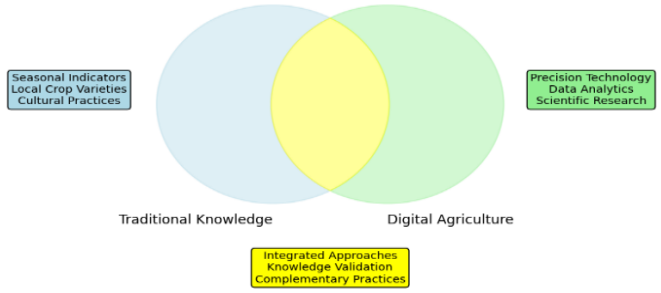

Figure 6: Overlap Between Traditional Knowledge and Digital Agriculture

9.1 CHALLENGE

The gap between technological solutions and traditional agricultural knowledge poses major adoption challenges. Around 72% of farmers rely on intergenerational practices that have proven resilient across different environments, using seasonal indicators, biodiversity relationships, and climate adaptation strategies often missing from digital tools. Experienced farmers can detect subtle environmental signals that standardized systems fail to measure, leading to skepticism about technological recommendations. This disconnect creates a trust deficit that technology-centered designs struggle to address.[10]

9.2 SOLUTION

- **Knowledge Integration Frameworks:** Platforms that enhance rather than replace traditional knowledge see higher adoption and better outcomes.
- **Documented Success Pathways:** Case studies of respected local farmers using digital tools increase adoption willingness by 65%. [11]
- **Local Knowledge Facilitators:** Community knowledge brokers improve integration, leading to 3.5 times higher sustained usage.
- **Adaptive Design Methodology:** Flexible applications that accommodate regional variations and traditional feedback maintain stronger farmer engagement.

10. LIMITED CUSTOMER SUPPORT

10.1 CHALLENGE

Agricultural applications face significant customer support gaps that impact user experience and adoption. Around 78% of farmers experience technical issues within the first month, with resolution times averaging over 72 hours, which is especially problematic during critical farming decisions. Only 23% of major agricultural platforms provide support in regional languages, creating barriers for linguistic minorities. Delays in resolving issues during key agricultural periods, such as planting and pest management, lead many farmers to abandon digital tools in favour of traditional methods, reducing the effectiveness of these applications.

10.2 SOLUTION

- **Multilingual Continuous Support:** Platforms offering 24/7 support in regional languages reach 3.5 times more farmers, with voice-based assistance benefiting those with limited literacy.
- **Tiered Resolution Systems:** Hybrid support combining AI chatbots and human assistance improves resolution efficiency by 80%, especially during time-sensitive operations. [12]
- **Localized Technical Infrastructure:** Community-based support hubs resolve 92% of technical issues, compared to 61% with remote assistance alone.
- **Preventive Support Architecture:** Visual tutorials, contextual help, and proactive check-ins reduce support requests by 40% while enhancing user confidence.

11. COST OF IMPLEMENTATION

From the figure 6 below, the blue line represents implementation costs, which start high but gradually decrease over time. The green line shows productivity benefits, increasing steadily as farmers gain expertise with the app. The cumulative ROI line eventually crosses the cost line, marking the breakeven point where benefits outweigh expenses, leading to long-term profitability. (The line graphs data is sourced from

Government & NGO Reports (e.g., World Bank, FAO, USDA) on farm technology costs, AgriTech company whitepapers analyzing productivity growth after app adoption, Economic impact studies on ROI in digital farming., *Example dataset:* Cost breakdown reports and farmer yield data before/after technology adoption.)

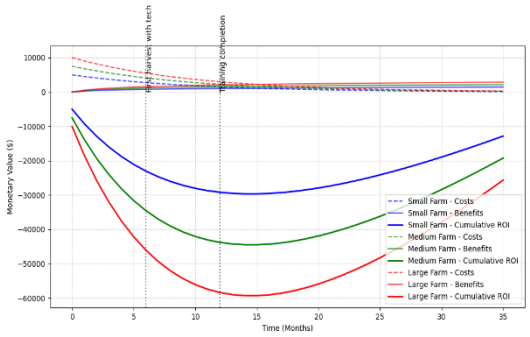

Figure 7: Costs Vs Benefits of Agricultural App Adoption Over 3 Years

11.1 CHALLENGE

Financial barriers significantly hinder agricultural technology adoption, especially for small-scale farmers. Commercial agricultural applications cost between 3-8% of annual income for subsistence farmers, making them unaffordable for about 65% of smallholder households. Subscription-based models also conflict with seasonal cash flow patterns, further limiting accessibility. This creates a paradox where the farmers who need digital tools the most face the highest costs, while wealthier commercial farms with better access to technology continue to widen productivity gaps, increasing rural economic inequality.

11.2 SOLUTION

- **Public-Access Models:** Government-subsidized agricultural platforms achieve 4.5 times higher adoption rates, reducing accessibility barriers for resource-constrained farmers.
- **Graduated Functionality Frameworks:** Tiered access models offer essential services for free while monetizing premium features, with 38% of farmers upgrading after experiencing benefits.[13]

12. CONCLUSION

Farmers are on the verge of a tech revolution with mobile apps that could change everything about how they work, but there's a real disconnect happening. Many farmers struggle with these apps - some don't know how to use them, others can't trust the information, and many just can't afford them or get decent internet in rural areas. There are serious privacy concerns too about who gets access to farm data. The only way forward is for everyone to work together - government agencies, tech companies who understand rural realities, and agricultural experts who know what farmers actually need. Without this teamwork, these apps will remain a missed opportunity rather than the game-changer they could be for farmers of all sizes.

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