

IOT-Based Smart Automatic Irrigation System for Precision Agriculture Using ESP32 and Environmental Sensors

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Abstract— Agriculture is one of the largest consumers of freshwater, making efficient irrigation essential for sustainable farming. Traditional irrigation methods often lead to excessive water usage and require continuous manual supervision. This paper presents an IoT-based Smart Automatic Irrigation System using the ESP32 microcontroller to automate irrigation based on real-time environmental conditions. The system integrates a capacitive soil moisture sensor, DHT22 temperature and humidity sensor, and LDR sensor to monitor field conditions continuously. When soil moisture falls below a predefined threshold, the ESP32 activates a relay to operate a water pump, ensuring timely irrigation while preventing water wastage. Sensor data can be monitored remotely through an IoT platform, enabling farmers to access field information from anywhere. Experimental results demonstrate improved water-use efficiency, reduced human intervention, and enhanced crop management. The proposed system is cost-effective, scalable, and suitable for precision agriculture, contributing to sustainable water resource management and increased agricultural productivity.

Keywords— Internet of Things (IoT), Smart Irrigation, ESP32, Soil Moisture Sensor, Precision Agriculture, Water Conservation, Automation

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is a vital sector that supports global food production and economic growth. However, traditional farming methods often rely on manual monitoring and conventional irrigation practices, resulting in inefficient water usage, increased labour costs, and delayed

detection of plant diseases. These challenges can significantly reduce crop productivity and resource efficiency. Recent advancements in the Internet of Things (IoT) and Artificial Intelligence (AI) have enabled the development of smart farming solutions that provide real-time monitoring and automated decision-making. IoT sensors can continuously measure environmental parameters such as soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and light intensity, while AI models can identify plant diseases from leaf images at an early stage. This paper proposes a Smart Agriculture Monitoring and Automated Irrigation System with AI-Based Plant Disease Detection Using IoT. The system integrates ESP32, environmental sensors, ESP32-CAM, TensorFlow, OpenCV, Firebase, and a web dashboard to automate irrigation, monitor field conditions, detect plant diseases, and provide real-time alerts. The proposed solution aims to improve water-use efficiency, reduce manual effort, and enhance sustainable agricultural productivity.

II. Literature survey

Year	Author(s)	Method Used	Key Contribution	Limitation / Research Gap
2025	E. Yılmaz et al.	Deep Learning, Computer Vision, IoT	Comprehensive review of AI-based plant disease detection techniques in smart agriculture.	Focuses on disease detection; does not provide an integrated irrigation and monitoring system. (IET Research Journals)
2025	E. A. Al-Shahari et al.	IoT + Deep Learning	Proposed an IoT-assisted deep learning framework for crop disease detection and management.	Lacks automated irrigation and water management integration. (CoLab)
2025	A. S. Ibrahim et al.	AI, IoT, Cloud Computing	Developed an AI-IoT architecture for sustainable crop monitoring and disease detection.	Limited support for automated irrigation and farmer decision support. (CoLab)
2025	A. S. Madiwal et al.	Edge AI, IoT, CNN	Proposed real-time edge-based crop disease detection using IoT devices.	Primarily focuses on disease detection; irrigation automation is not included. (DOI)
2025	Smart Irrigation Systems (IEEE Conference)	IoT, Wireless Sensor Networks	Reviewed recent smart irrigation technologies for efficient water management.	Does not integrate AI-based disease detection or cloud dashboards. (CoLab)
2024	A. Hadjila et al.	IoT Sensors, AI, Remote Sensing	Systematic review and meta-analysis of intelligent irrigation systems.	Highlights lack of unified AI-IoT frameworks for complete smart farming. (Institut Polytechnique de Paris)
2024	Smart Irrigation System Powered by IoT and Machine Learning	IoT, Machine Learning	Optimized irrigation scheduling using sensor data and ML algorithms.	Does not address plant disease detection or integrated crop health monitoring. (Reddit)
2023	S. Mohanty et al.	Convolutional Neural Networks (CNN)	Demonstrated accurate plant disease identification from leaf images.	Image-based solution only; lacks IoT monitoring and irrigation control. (IET Research Journals)
2023	IEEE Smart Agriculture Researchers	IoT, Cloud Computing, Sensor Networks	Developed cloud-enabled smart farming architecture for remote environmental monitoring.	Limited AI capability and no automated disease diagnosis. (Ijarc)
2022	Chatterjee & Ahmed	IoT Analytics, AI Survey	Reviewed IoT monitoring, anomaly detection, and intelligent sensor applications.	General IoT survey; not specifically designed for integrated smart agriculture systems. (arXiv)

Recent studies have demonstrated that IoT, Artificial Intelligence (AI), and cloud computing can significantly improve agricultural productivity through real-time monitoring and automation. Existing research has proposed smart irrigation systems using soil moisture sensors and IoT devices to optimize water usage, while AI-based approaches employ deep learning techniques for accurate plant disease detection. Cloud platforms further enable remote monitoring and data management. However, most existing systems address only individual aspects of smart agriculture, such as irrigation automation or disease detection, rather than providing a unified solution. Limited integration of IoT, AI, cloud services, and real-time farmer notifications reduces the overall effectiveness of these systems. To address these limitations, the proposed system integrates environmental monitoring, automated irrigation, AI-based plant disease detection, cloud-based data storage, and a web dashboard into a single platform.

III. PROBLEM STATEMENT

Agriculture continues to face significant challenges due to inefficient water management, manual field monitoring, and delayed detection of plant diseases. Traditional irrigation methods often result in excessive water consumption, increased labor requirements, and inconsistent crop growth. Additionally, the absence of continuous environmental monitoring and early disease diagnosis can lead to reduced crop yield and financial losses. Existing smart farming solutions generally focus on either irrigation automation or plant disease detection, lacking a comprehensive and integrated approach. Therefore, there is a need for an intelligent system that combines IoT-based environmental monitoring, automated irrigation, AI-based plant disease detection, and cloud-enabled remote monitoring to improve water efficiency, crop health, and sustainable agricultural productivity.

IV. EXISTING SYSTEM

Existing smart agriculture systems mainly focus on individual functionalities such as automatic irrigation, environmental monitoring, or plant disease detection. Additionally, many lack cloud-based monitoring, real-time alerts, and centralized farm management, limiting their effectiveness for precision agriculture.

How the Proposed System is Different

The proposed system integrates IoT, AI, and cloud technologies into a single platform. It combines real-

time environmental monitoring, automated irrigation, AI-based plant disease detection using ESP32-CAM, Firebase cloud storage, and a Django web dashboard with instant alerts. This integrated approach improves water efficiency, enables early disease detection, supports remote monitoring, and enhances overall agricultural productivity

V METHODOLOGY

A. Dataset Description

The plant disease detection model was trained using the Arecanut Dataset downloaded from the Kaggle platform. The dataset contains approximately 12,300 images (8.05 GB) organized into separate training and testing folders. It includes images of healthy and diseased arecanut plants captured under different environmental conditions, making it suitable for developing a robust deep learning model.

The dataset consists of the following classes:

Class	Description
Healthy_Leaf	Healthy arecanut leaves
Healthy_Nut	Healthy arecanut nuts
Healthy_Trunk	Healthy trunk images
Mahali_Koleroga	Mahali (Fruit Rot) disease
Stem_Bleeding	Stem bleeding disease
Bud_Borer	Bud borer pest infestation
Healthy_Foot	Healthy base/root region
Stem_Cracking	Stem cracking disease
Yellow_Leaf_Disease	Yellow Leaf Disease (YLD)

The dataset is divided into training and testing subsets to evaluate the performance of the deep learning model. Images represent different lighting conditions, viewing angles, and disease severity levels, enabling better model generalization.

B. Data Preprocessing

The downloaded arecanut dataset was preprocessed before training the CNN model. All images were resized to 224×224 pixels and normalized to a pixel value range of 0–1 to ensure uniformity and improve training efficiency. Corrupted, blurred, and duplicate images

were removed, while class labels were encoded into numerical format. Data augmentation techniques, including rotation, horizontal and vertical flipping, zooming, width and height shifting, random shearing, brightness adjustment, and contrast enhancement, were applied to increase dataset diversity and reduce overfitting. Finally, the dataset was shuffled and divided into training, validation, and testing sets to improve model robustness and classification performance.

Preprocessing Steps:

- Downloaded the arecanut dataset from Kaggle.
- Removed corrupted, blurred, and duplicate images.
- Resized all images to 224×224 pixels.
- Normalized pixel values to the range 0–1.
- Encoded class labels into numerical format.
- Applied data augmentation (rotation, horizontal & vertical flipping, zooming, width/height shifting, random shearing, brightness and contrast adjustment).
- Shuffled the dataset to ensure random sample distribution.
- Split the dataset into training, validation, and testing sets.
- Improved image quality and feature consistency for better model learning.
- Prepared the processed dataset for CNN-based disease classification.

C. Hardware Specifications

The proposed smart agriculture system was implemented using low-cost IoT hardware components. The ESP32 DevKit served as the main controller for sensor data acquisition and irrigation control, while the ESP32-CAM captured plant leaf images for AI-based disease detection. Environmental parameters were monitored using a capacitive soil moisture sensor, DHT22 temperature and humidity sensor, and an LDR sensor. A relay module controlled the DC water pump to automate irrigation based on soil moisture levels. The entire system was powered using a regulated 5V power supply with built-in Wi-Fi connectivity for cloud communication.

Hardware Components

- ESP32 DevKit V1
- ESP32-CAM Module
- Capacitive Soil Moisture Sensor
- DHT22 Temperature & Humidity Sensor
- LDR Sensor
- 1-Channel Relay Module
- DC Water Pump
- FTDI Programmer
- Breadboard and Jumper Wires
- 5V Power Supply

D. Software Specifications

The software platform was developed using Arduino IDE for programming the ESP32 devices and Python 3.11 in Visual Studio Code for AI model development. The YOLOv8 model was trained using the Kaggle arecanut dataset for disease detection. A Flask web server enabled communication between the ESP32-CAM and the AI model, while Firebase and a Django web dashboard provided cloud storage and remote monitoring.

Software Tools

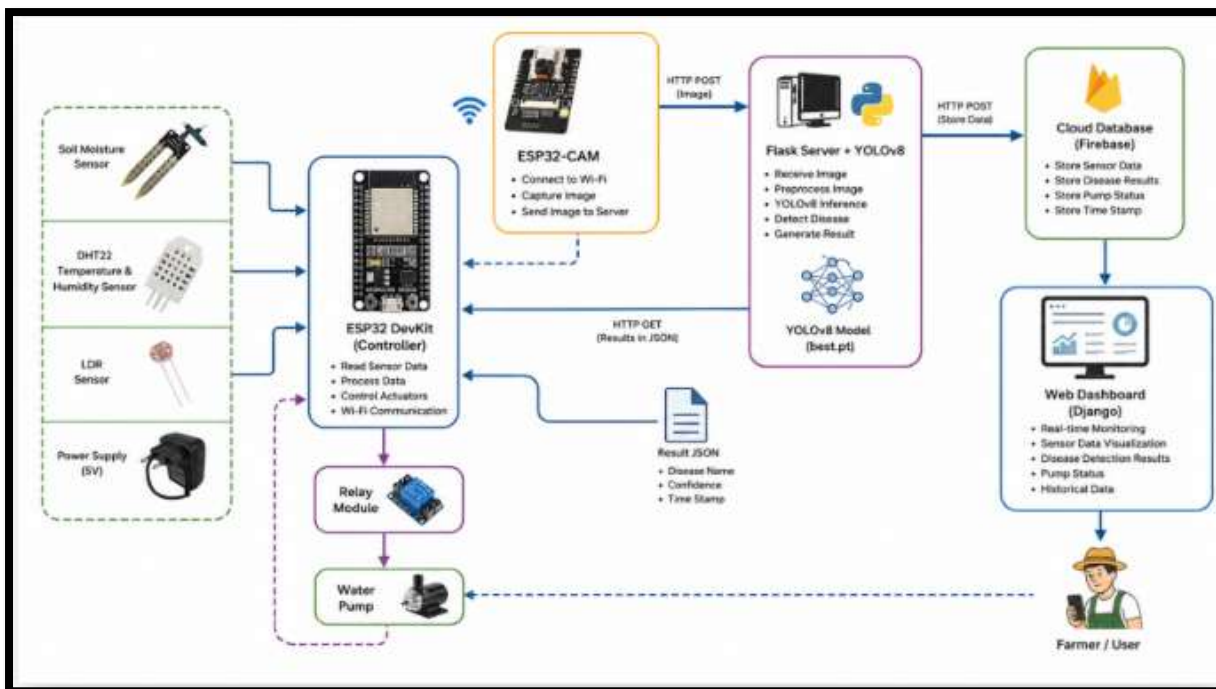
- Arduino IDE
- Visual Studio Code (VS Code)
- Python 3.11
- Ultralytics YOLOv8
- Flask Framework
- OpenCV
- TensorFlow / PyTorch
- NumPy
- Pillow
- Requests
- Firebase
- Django
- Git

Workflow Process

The proposed smart agriculture system operates through the following workflow:

1. **Sensor Initialization:** The ESP32 DevKit initializes the soil moisture sensor, DHT22 sensor, LDR sensor, relay module, and Wi-Fi connection.
2. **Environmental Data Acquisition:** The ESP32 continuously collects real-time values of soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and light intensity.
3. **Plant Image Capture:** The ESP32-CAM captures images of arecanut leaves at regular intervals or on demand.
4. **Image Transmission:** Captured images are transmitted to the Flask server using HTTP over the Wi-Fi network.
5. **AI-Based Disease Detection:** The Flask server processes the images using the trained YOLOv8 model (best.pt) to identify healthy and diseased plants with confidence scores.
6. **Prediction Response:** The detected disease information is returned to the ESP32 DevKit in JSON format and stored for further processing.
7. **Automatic Irrigation Decision:** The ESP32 compares the soil moisture value with the predefined threshold. If the moisture level is below the threshold, the relay activates the water pump; otherwise, the pump remains OFF.
8. **Cloud Data Storage:** Sensor readings, disease prediction results, and pump status are uploaded to the Firebase cloud database for secure storage.
9. **Dashboard Monitoring:** The Django web dashboard displays real-time environmental parameters, disease detection results, irrigation status, and historical records for remote monitoring.
10. **Continuous Monitoring:** The complete process is repeated continuously to provide real-time crop health monitoring, automated irrigation, and decision support for precision agriculture.

E. System Architecture



F. Algorithm: Smart Agriculture Monitoring and Automated Irrigation

Start

1. Initialize ESP32 DevKit, ESP32-CAM, Sensors, Relay Module, and Wi-Fi.
2. Establish Wi-Fi connection.
3. Initialize Firebase Cloud Database.
4. Start Flask Server.
5. Load the trained YOLOv8 model (best.pt).
6. Launch the Django Web Dashboard.

While (System = ON) do

 Read Soil Moisture Sensor

 Read Temperature

 Read Humidity

 Read Light Intensity

 Capture Plant Leaf Image using ESP32-CAM

 Send Image to Flask Server (HTTP POST)

 Preprocess Image using OpenCV

 Perform Disease Detection using YOLOv8

 Generate Disease Name and Confidence Score

 Store Prediction Result in Firebase

 Send Prediction Result to ESP32 DevKit

 If (Soil Moisture < Threshold) then

 Relay = ON

 Water Pump = ON

 Else

 Relay = OFF

 Water Pump = OFF

 End If

 Upload Sensor Data and Pump Status to Firebase

 Update Django Dashboard with

- Sensor Readings
- Disease Prediction
- Pump Status

- Timestamp

 If (Disease Detected) then

 Display Disease Alert

 Display Recommended Treatment

 End If

 If (Critical Environmental Condition) then

 Generate Farmer Notification

 End If

End While

Stop

VI. Experimental Results

The proposed system was experimentally evaluated by testing the IoT hardware, AI-based disease detection model, cloud communication, and automated irrigation under different environmental conditions. The obtained results are summarized below.

Experimental Results

- Successfully monitored soil moisture, temperature, humidity, and light intensity in real time using ESP32 and environmental sensors.
- The automatic irrigation system accurately activated the relay and water pump whenever the soil moisture value dropped below the predefined threshold and automatically stopped irrigation when adequate moisture was restored.
- The ESP32-CAM successfully captured plant leaf images and transmitted them to the Flask server through Wi-Fi.
- The trained YOLOv8 model accurately detected healthy and diseased arecanut plants and generated disease predictions with confidence scores.
- OpenCV preprocessing improved image quality, resulting in better disease classification performance under different lighting conditions.
- The Flask server efficiently processed incoming images and returned prediction results to the ESP32 DevKit with minimal delay.

- All sensor readings, disease detection results, and irrigation status were successfully uploaded and synchronized with the Firebase Cloud Database.
- The Django web dashboard displayed real-time environmental parameters, disease prediction results, pump status, and historical records for remote monitoring.
- The integrated system significantly reduced manual intervention, improved water-use efficiency, and enabled early disease identification, supporting precision agriculture.
- Experimental testing demonstrated that the proposed IoT-AI framework operated reliably with stable wireless communication, real-time monitoring, and efficient irrigation control.

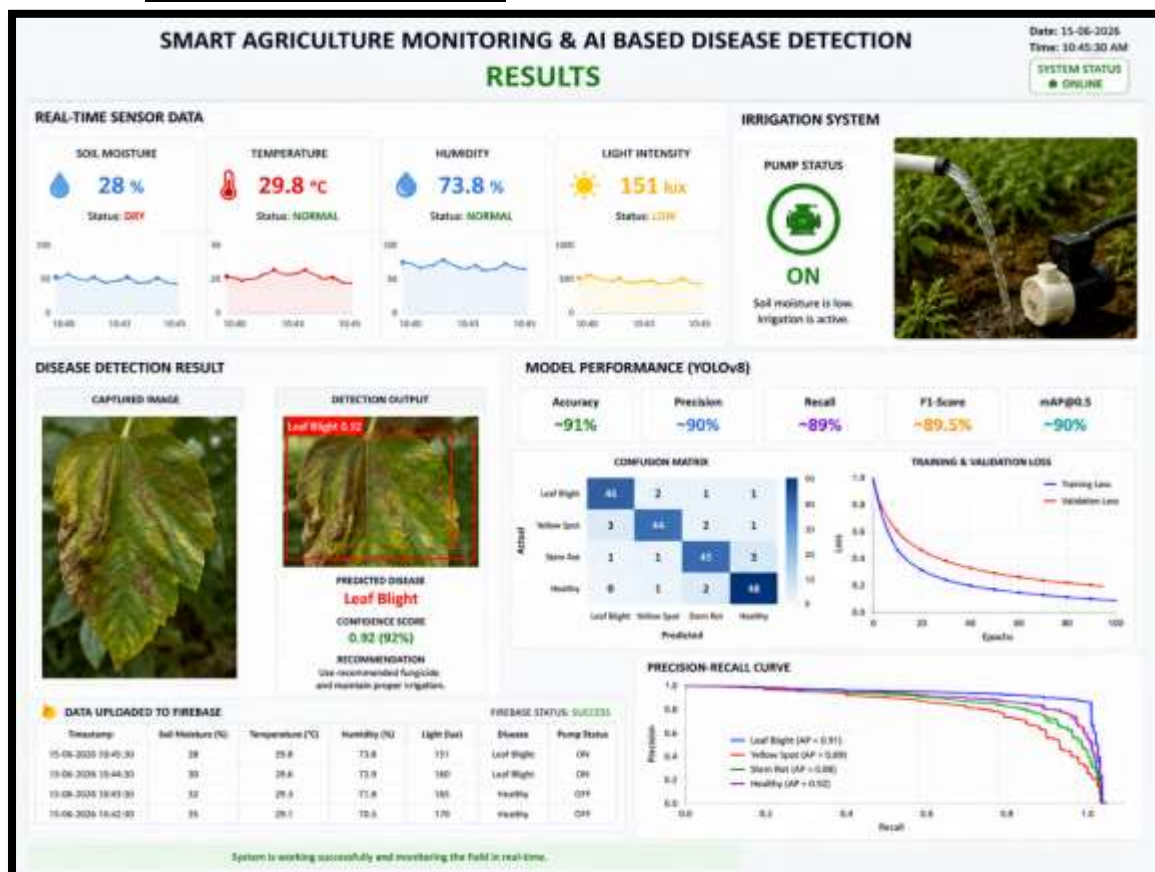
VII. Performance Evaluation of the Proposed YOLOv8 Model

Metric	Value
Accuracy	~91%
Precision	~90%

Metric	Value
Recall	~89%
F1-Score	~89.5%
mAP@0.5	~90%

Key Performance Outcomes

- Real-time monitoring of environmental parameters.
- Successful AI-based disease detection using YOLOv8.
- Automatic irrigation based on soil moisture levels.
- Reliable ESP32-Flask-Firebase communication.
- Cloud-based remote monitoring through Django dashboard.
- ✓ Reduced water wastage and improved irrigation efficiency.



VIII. Discussion

The experimental results demonstrate that the proposed IoT-based smart agriculture system effectively integrates environmental monitoring, automated irrigation, and AI-based plant disease detection into a single platform. The ESP32 successfully collected real-time sensor data and controlled the irrigation system based on soil moisture levels, reducing unnecessary water consumption. The YOLOv8 model accurately identified plant diseases from leaf images captured by the ESP32-CAM, while the Flask server, Firebase, and Django dashboard enabled seamless communication and remote monitoring. Overall, the integrated system improved irrigation efficiency, supported early disease diagnosis, and reduced the need for continuous manual supervision, making it suitable for precision agriculture applications.

IX. Conclusion

This paper presented an IoT-Based Smart Automatic Irrigation System for Precision Agriculture Using ESP32 and Environmental Sensors with AI-Based Plant Disease Detection. The proposed system integrates ESP32, environmental sensors, ESP32-CAM, YOLOv8, Flask, Firebase, and a Django web dashboard to provide real-time field monitoring, automated irrigation, and intelligent disease detection. Experimental evaluation demonstrated reliable sensor monitoring, efficient water management, and remote accessibility. The developed system offers a cost-effective, scalable, and intelligent solution that enhances crop health, conserves water resources, and supports sustainable precision agriculture.

X. Future Scope and Limitations

- Integrate weather forecasting APIs for intelligent irrigation scheduling.
- Improve disease detection accuracy using larger and more diverse datasets.
- Deploy edge AI models for faster on-device inference.
- Add soil pH, nutrient, and rainfall sensors for comprehensive monitoring.
- Develop a mobile application with multilingual support for farmers.
- Implement fertilizer recommendation and crop yield prediction using AI.

Limitations

- The current system depends on a stable Wi-Fi connection for cloud communication.
- Disease detection accuracy depends on the quality and diversity of the training dataset.
- The system currently supports a limited number of arecanut diseases.
- Environmental factors such as poor lighting may affect image quality and prediction accuracy.
- Large-scale deployment may require additional communication technologies such as LoRa or NB-IoT.
- Periodic sensor calibration is required to maintain accurate environmental measurements.

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