DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF SOLAR POWERED MULTI PURPOSE FARMING SYSTEM

DR. K PRAVEENA [1*] | P VARSHAVARDHANI [2] | T HIMAVANTH [3] | B PENTAMMA [4] | B UDAYKIRAN [5]

[1] ASSISTANT PROFESSOR, DEPARTMENT OF EEE, AVANTHI INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, TAGARAPUVALASA, INDIA.
[2, 3, 4,5] STUDENT, DEPARTMENT OF EEE, AVANTHI INSTITUTE OF ENGINEERING AND TECHNOLOGY, TAGARAPUVALASA, INDIA.

ABSTRACT:

This paper presents the design and development of a solar-powered multi-purpose farming system aimed at improving agricultural efficiency through automation and renewable energy utilization. The proposed system integrates an Arduino Mega-based control unit with multiple sensors, including LIDAR, ultrasonic, and soil moisture sensors, to enable autonomous navigation, obstacle detection, and real-time monitoring. The robot performs key agricultural operations such as irrigation, seed sowing, fertilizer dispensing, and grass cutting with minimal human intervention. A solar power generation and storage system ensures sustainable and cost-effective energy supply. The system operates in both manual and automatic modes, offering flexibility to farmers. Experimental results demonstrate improved resource utilization, reduced labor dependency, and enhanced operational efficiency. The proposed system provides a practical and economical solution for modern smart agriculture.

KEYWORDS:

SMART AGRICULTURE, SOLAR POWER, ARDUINO MEGA, LIDAR, SOIL MOISTURE SENSOR, AUTOMATION, AGRICULTURAL ROBOT, IOT, IRRIGATION SYSTEM, PRECISION FARMING.

PAPER ACCEPTED DATE:	PAPER PUBLISHED DATE:
5th April 2026	7th April 2026

INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a crucial role in the economic development of many countries, especially in developing nations. However, traditional farming practices are labor-intensive, time-consuming, and often inefficient [1]. The increasing demand for food production and the shortage of labor have accelerated the need for automation in agriculture [2].

Recent advancements in smart agriculture technologies have introduced the use of sensors, robotics, and IoT systems to enhance productivity and optimize resource utilization [3]. Agricultural robots are capable of performing tasks such as seeding, irrigation, and monitoring with high precision and reduced human effort [4]. The integration of autonomous navigation systems, such as LIDAR-based obstacle detection, has further improved the efficiency and safety of these robots [5].

Automated irrigation systems using soil moisture sensors help conserve water and maintain optimal soil conditions [6]. Similarly, ultrasonic sensors are widely used for level detection and resource monitoring in agricultural applications [7]. The use of renewable energy sources, particularly solar power, has gained importance in reducing operational costs and environmental impact [8].

Despite these advancements, most existing systems focus on single functionalities and lack integration [9]. There is a need for a comprehensive system capable of performing multiple agricultural operations efficiently [10]. This paper proposes a solar-powered multi-purpose farming system that addresses these challenges by integrating various technologies into a single platform.

MATERIALS AND METHODS:

The proposed solar-powered multi-purpose farming system was developed by integrating various hardware and software components into a unified platform. The system is centered around an Arduino Mega 2560 microcontroller, which serves as the primary control unit for processing sensor inputs and managing actuator operations. Multiple sensors, including a LIDAR sensor for obstacle detection and navigation, an ultrasonic sensor (HC-SR04) for monitoring the levels of water, seeds, and fertilizers, and a soil moisture sensor for assessing soil conditions, were employed to enable intelligent decision-making. Actuators such as servo motors were used for seed sowing and fertilizer dispensing, while DC motors facilitated the movement of the robot. A BLDC motor was incorporated for grass-cutting operations, and a water pump was used to automate irrigation based on soil moisture levels. The system also includes a wireless communication module (ESP8266/ESP32) to enable real-time data transmission and remote monitoring.

To ensure sustainable operation, a solar power generation system comprising a photovoltaic panel, charge controller, and lithium-ion battery was integrated to supply and store electrical energy. The overall system was designed to operate in both manual and automatic modes. In automatic mode, the robot navigates autonomously using LIDAR data, activates irrigation when low soil moisture is detected, and performs seed and fertilizer dispensing at predefined intervals. In manual mode, the user can control the robot's movement and operations through wireless commands. The system was programmed using Embedded C in the Arduino IDE, with algorithms developed for navigation, obstacle avoidance, irrigation control, and task automation. All components were interconnected and tested to ensure coordinated functionality and reliable performance in agricultural environments.

RESULTS:

The system was tested under different operating conditions, and the following results were observed:

- **Navigation:** Accurate obstacle detection and avoidance using LIDAR
- **Irrigation:** Efficient water usage based on soil moisture levels
- **Seed & Fertilizer Dispensing:** Uniform distribution achieved
- **Grass Cutting:** Effective performance using BLDC motor
- **Monitoring:** Real-time data transmission of resource levels
- **Modes of Operation:** Smooth switching between manual and automatic modes

The system demonstrated reliable performance and improved operational efficiency in agricultural tasks.

The developed solar-powered multi-purpose farming system was successfully fabricated and tested under real-time conditions. The integrated system demonstrated effective performance in terms of navigation, irrigation, and multi-functional operations. The robot was able to operate using solar energy, ensuring sustainable power utilization. The hardware integration of sensors, actuators, and control modules functioned as expected, providing reliable and efficient performance.

The physical prototype of the developed system is shown in **Fig. 1**, where the solar panel, control unit, and robotic platform are integrated into a single structure. The figure illustrates the arrangement of key components such as the solar panel for power generation, embedded control modules, and mobility system.

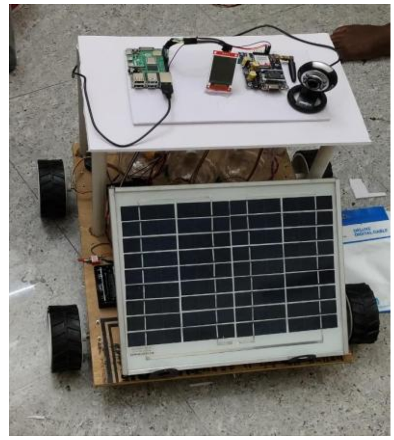

FIG. 1: PROTOTYPE OF SOLAR POWERED MULTI-PURPOSE FARMING SYSTEM

The experimental results indicate that the system can effectively reduce manual labor, optimize resource usage, and perform multiple agricultural tasks with improved accuracy. The solar-powered operation further enhances the system's efficiency and suitability for rural and remote farming applications.

DISCUSSION:

The developed system successfully integrates multiple agricultural functions into a single platform, addressing the limitations of existing systems. The use of LIDAR improves navigation accuracy compared to traditional sensors. Soil moisture-based irrigation significantly reduces water wastage. The incorporation of solar power enhances sustainability and reduces dependency on external power sources. However, the system is currently limited to small-scale applications and requires proper sensor calibration for optimal performance. Environmental conditions such as uneven terrain and extreme weather may affect system efficiency. Future improvements can include GPS-based navigation, AI-based crop monitoring, and IoT-based remote control.

CONCLUSIONS:

This paper presents a solar-powered multi-purpose farming system designed to automate key agricultural operations. The system effectively reduces manual labor, optimizes resource usage, and improves farming efficiency. The integration of sensors, automation, and renewable energy makes it a cost-effective and sustainable solution for modern agriculture. The results demonstrate that the proposed system is suitable for small and medium-scale farming applications. Future enhancements can further expand its capabilities and scalability.

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