

Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution using IoT

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ABSTRACT

The escalating demand for sustainable and high-yield food production has accelerated the adoption of holistic vertical farming systems integrated with renewable energy and intellectual automation. This research proposes a Solar-Powered Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution using Internet of Things (IoT) technologies to enhance crop productivity and to optimize resource utilization and minimize farming operational costs for sustainable vertical farming. The system integrates photovoltaic (PV) panels that convert sunlight directly into electricity to ensure an uninterrupted clean energy supply for irrigation pumps and control units. A network of IoT enabled sensors monitoring parameters such as pH, temperature, humidity, soil moisture, nutrient concentration (EC) deals with real-time data to a cloud-based analytics platform. The proposed nutrient algorithm dynamically adjusts the nutrient flow and irrigation cycles, thereby reducing nutrient waste and ensuring accurate relief to each plant layer in the vertical heap. The proposed framework ensures predictive analytics using Machine Learning (ML) models to foresee plant nutrient necessities and energy treatment patterns which enhances overall farming productivity. This paper focuses on designing an integrated solution where IoT-driven nutrient delivery is powered completely by solar energy, enabling efficient and effective Vertical Farming (VF) systems. Further with the help of framework and algorithm experiments are carried out and results are demonstrated to check whether reduction in water consumption and efficient nutrient utilization. The result



highlights the potential of augmented solar energy with IoT to establish adequate energy efficient, reliable and data-driven vertical sustainable farming system compatible for rural agriculture in Indian environment.

Keywords: Vertical Farming (VM), Nutrient Delivery System (NDS), Data Driven Farming (DDF), Internet of Things (IoT), Solar Energy

1. Vertical Farming (VF) Sustainability

Current food demand is projected to increase substantially due to population growth and climate change. Traditional farming methods face challenges such as decreasing high water consumption, dependence on non-renewable energy sources and soil fertility, soil fertility. Vertical Farming (VF)

augmented with renewable energy and digital innovations has ensured a sustainable agricultural farming. IoT-based agriculture enables continuous monitoring and precise resource use, while solar energy ensures uninterrupted, low-cost power for remote installations.

The challenges of producing more food with fewer resources have pushed agriculture toward a technological revolution. With shrinking cultivable land, unpredictable climate patterns, and rising energy demands. Traditional farming systems are struggling to keep pace with the nutritional needs of rapidly growing populations. The integration of solar energy with IoT-driven nutrient delivery offers a powerful and sustainable solution. Solar photovoltaic (PV) power provides clean and uninterrupted energy for irrigation, dosing pumps and monitoring systems while IoT sensors enable real-time visibility into plant health, environmental conditions and nutrient dynamics. Combining these technologies creates a self-reliant farming model that operates independently of grid electricity and minimizes human intervention.

The proposed Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution leverages advanced sensing, wireless communication, and intelligent control algorithms to achieve precise fustigation across multiple vertical layers. By automating nutrient supply based on pH, EC, moisture, and microclimate conditions, the system ensures optimal plant growth with significantly reduced water and fertilizer wastage. The fusion of renewable energy, smart

sensing, and predictive analytics has the potential to redefine modern agriculture—enabling resilient food production in urban spaces, rural greenhouses, remote communities, and extreme environments where traditional farming is impractical. This innovative approach not only improves crop yield and resource efficiency but also demonstrates how IoT and solar energy can collaboratively shape the next generation of sustainable farming technologies.

2. Experiments and Fictions: Literature Review

Contemporary research emphasizes integrating IoT with technology driven agriculture farming for real- time monitoring and innovative decision-making. Previous experiments on vertical farming highlight challenges in nutrient supply consistency and energy dependency. This study on solar-powered systems show promising outcomes for irrigation but lack complete integration with nutrient delivery and predictive analytics. IoT based approaches for agriculture have been effective for forecasting water demands and detecting crop stress, yet their use in nutrient optimization for vertical farming remains limited.

3. Research Gaps

The reviewed studies reveal several unresolved research issues and below gap identified based on literature review as-:

Gap Area	Identified Limitation
Techno-economic Integration	Lack of unified models linking PV sizing, battery economics, fertigation performance, and crop returns [4]
Predictive Fertigation Validation	Limited multi-cycle comparative trials for ML-based nutrient management [2], [9]
Sensor Reliability	Inadequate long-term validation of drift-compensated EC/pH sensors [6]
Energy-Aware Fertigation	Weak integration of PV forecast data in nutrient scheduling [4], [19]
Standardization & Security	Missing edge/cloud IoT guidelines and security enforcement [15], [16]

Table-1: Identified research gap



4. Objectives in Farming System

Detailed objectives are framed by considering literature reviews and gap identified and these objectives are taken for experimentation based on their benefits to vertical farming as-

Key Purpose	Benefit in Vertical Farming
Monitor live sensor data	Check nutrient and environment status anytime
Visualize historical data trends	Optimize nutrient planning and irrigation
Control pumps & valves remotely	Automation with user override
Configure alert thresholds	Prevent crop stress (pH/EC imbalance)
Manage users, devices, zones	Scalable multi-rack system

Table-2: Objectives and benefits of vertical farming

a) Objectives of Machine Learning (ML) in the System

Objective	Benefit to Vertical Farming
Predict nutrient requirement	Prevent nutrient deficiency / toxicity
Forecast EC & pH deviations	Avoid crop stress and yield loss
Optimize water–nutrient ratio	Higher nutrient use efficiency
Enable automated dosing decisions	Reduction in manual intervention
Early detection of anomalies	Pump failure / dry conditions alerts

Table-3 Objectives of ML use in Vertical Farming

b) Benefits for Solar Vertical Farming

- Reduced energy which is best for solar power
- Real-time nutrient automation
- Scalable to multiple zones
- Supports AI-based analytics

- Reliable data even with weak GSM/Wi-Fi

c) Research Direction and Opportunity

To address these gaps, future work should incorporate:

1. PV-aware fertigation controller synchronized with battery State-of-Charge.
2. Automated EC/pH fault detection and calibration to improve reliability at scale.
3. Integrated techno-economic assessment linking energy, nutrient, and water footprints.
4. Layered architecture combining edge safety loops and cloud intelligence.
5. Cultivar-specific ML nutrient prediction using multi-season datasets.

Such an integrated framework can significantly enhance operational efficiency, reduce environmental impact, and improve scalability of solar-powered vertical farming [1], [5], [19], [20].

5. System Architecture: Software & Hardware Components

Machine Learning Models for Nutrient Prediction

A cloud server for your solar-powered vertical-farming IoT nutrient-delivery system is the backbone that collects data from all sensors/actuators, stores it, runs analytics, and enables monitoring / control from anywhere (phone/computer). Below is an overview of what such a cloud server setup looks like with images , technical/specification ideas, and how it's used in vertical-farming + IoT contexts.

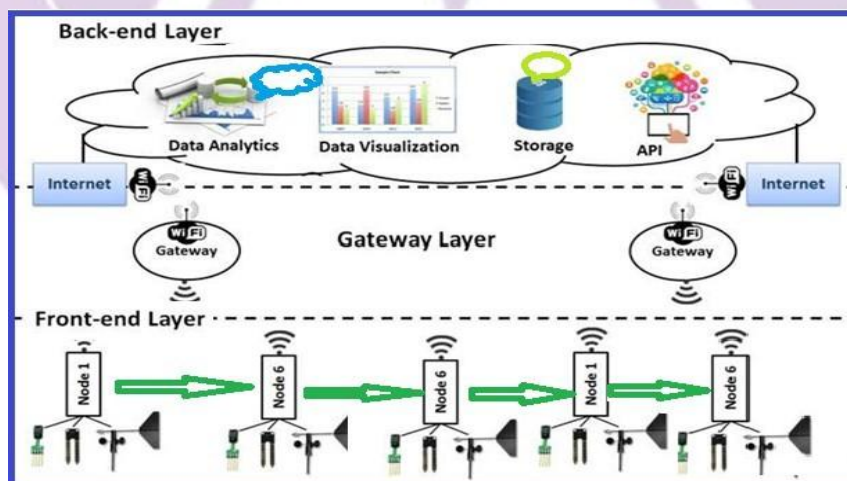


Figure-1: System Architecture

Below are the few software and hardware components indented to design above architecture as-?

Software Components	Hardware Components
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MQTT/HTTP communication protocol • Machine learning models for nutrient prediction • Cloud-based dashboard (Node-RED / Things Board) • Mobile app interface for monitoring and control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nutrient pump and solenoid valves • Solar PV panels (250W–500W) • Battery bank and charge controller • IoT sensors: pH, EC, soil moisture, temperature, humidity • Wi-Fi/GSM IoT gateway • Cloud server for data analytics

Table-4 Required Software and Hardware components

a) Frontend Visualization Layer

Used for real-time display & user interaction

- Graphs: pH, EC, soil moisture, temperature, humidity
- Trend charts & data history
- Buttons/Sliders for remote control
- Status indicators: Pump/Valves ON/OFF

Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution using IoT system continuously collects environmental and nutrient-related sensor data such as pH, EC, soil moisture, temperature, and humidity. Machine Learning (ML) analyzes this historical data to predict nutrient requirements, enabling precision dosing for optimal crop growth.

b) Data Ingestion Layer

Collects sensor data from IoT cloud

- Input: pH, EC, moisture, temp, humidity, dosing events
- Protocol: MQTT / HTTP
- Source: Cloud Database (InfluxDB / MongoDB / SQL)

c) Data Preprocessing & Feature

Engineering Layer Tasks:



- Cleaning missing/invalid values
- Filtering sensor noise
- Scaling/normalization for ML models
- Feature extraction:
 - Derived EC/pH stability score
 - Daily nutrient uptake rate
 - Crop growth stage mapping
 - Weather impact factor

Tools: Python, Pandas, NumPy, Scikit-learn

d) Machine Learning Algorithm Layer

Recommended Models for Nutrient Prediction:

Model Type	Purpose in Farming System
Linear Regression / Polynomial Regression	Baseline nutrient requirement forecasting
Random Forest Regression	Predict nutrient demand based on multiple parameters
Support Vector Regression (SVR)	Accurate prediction for non-linear nutrient absorption
LSTM Neural Networks	Time-series prediction of EC/pH trends
K-Means Clustering	Growers segmentation based on nutrient/water usage
Anomaly Detection (Isolation Forest)	Detect pump blockage or extreme nutrient behavior

Table-5: Model purpose in Vertical farming

Deep learning is useful when: Multiple sensor zones and Long-term time-series data (vertical farming racks)

e) Model Training & Evaluation Layer

Runs on: Cloud server / Edge gateway (ESP32 optional inference only)

Tasks:

- Train using collected historical data



- Evaluate with RMSE, MAE, R^2 metrics
- Hyper-parameter tuning (Sklearn,

TensorFlow) Model Output Examples:

- Required nutrient volume (ml/hour)
- Time to next pump activation
- EC/pH expected 24 hours ahead

6. Role and Purpose of Cloud Server Based IoT in Farming

The cloud server acts as a central repository and processing center: all sensor data (soil moisture, pH, EC, temperature, humidity etc.) coming from your microcontroller / IoT gateway — is sent to the cloud. Thereafter data is stored, analyzed, visualized with the help machine learning lifecycle with software tools. This makes long-term data logging, trend analysis, and remote monitoring possible.

It reduces need for on-site hardware: Instead of a local PC/server on the farm, cloud server keeps data safe, backed-up, accessible and reliably maintained good for remote / rural setup. It enables remote access & control. The cloud-based platform can expose a dashboard (web or mobile), so users can see real-time or historical farm data, receive alerts (low moisture, pH/EC), and even send commands from anywhere. It allows scalability and data-driven decision making: As farm grows, cloud can scale to handle more data; you can also run analytics or apply AI/ML for predictive irrigation, nutrient scheduling, crop recommendation, yield optimization etc.

Thus, cloud **server** + IoT + sensors + actuators = a remotely-manageable, data-driven vertical farming system.

a) Key Functional Features

Below are the compiled features and their usages during the execution of systems as -

Feature	Description
Real-time Monitoring	Live display of pH, EC, soil moisture, temperature, humidity data
Actuator Control	Manual/automatic control of pumps, solenoid valves, nutrient



	dosing
Alerts & Notifications	SMS/Push alerts for abnormal pH, EC, water levels, humidity
Historical Analytics	Graphs & trend charts for nutrient conditions over time
Multi-Farm Dashboard	Manage multiple vertical farm towers in one app
Crop-specific Presets	Select crop → auto-apply ideal nutrient parameters
Connectivity	Works over Wi-Fi, GSM/4G/5G and MQTT/HTTP
User Management	Login, roles — Admin/Farmer/Technician
Offline Mode	Local Bluetooth/Offline control fallback in case of cloud loss

Table-6: Functional Features of system

b) Usage in Vertical Solar Farming

We have categorized the key factors of this system and how it can assist to all types of Framers as-

Category	Assistance to rural area farmer
Nutrient Management	Adjusts nutrient dosing based on ML predictions
Resource Efficiency	Tracks water/energy usage to reduce wastage
Disease Prevention	Alerts for abnormal humidity/temperature
Accessibility	Monitor crops anytime, anywhere

Table-7: Usage in vertical solar farming

7. Methodology for ML Model Workflow

The system uses solar panels to supply continuous energy for sensors, pumps, and microcontroller units. Sensor data is collected and transmitted to a cloud server at fixed intervals. A nutrient delivery algorithm adjusts the dosing rate using:

- pH to regulate acidity,
- EC to estimate nutrient concentration,



- Moisture data to decide irrigation timing.

Machine learning models like random forest or regression analyze historical data to predict nutrient needs based on crop type, growth stage, and environmental readings. Automated actuators control pumps and valves based on real-time and predicted values. Alerts are pushed to users in case of abnormal readings or system failures.

The proposed IoT-enabled Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery System operates through a sequence of energy supply, sensing, communication, analytics, and automated actuation processes. The methodology involves the following major components:

a) Renewable Power Supply

Solar photovoltaic (PV) panels are used as the primary energy source to provide continuous, off-grid power to:

- IoT sensors (pH, EC, soil moisture, temperature, humidity)
- Nutrient pumps and solenoid valves
- Microcontroller unit (ESP32)
- Wireless communication gateway

Charge controller and battery storage ensure uninterrupted operation during low-sunlight conditions.

b) Sensor Data Acquisition and Transmission

Sensors are placed at multiple levels of the vertical farming setup to monitor:

- pH of nutrient solution (acidity control)
- Electrical Conductivity (EC) for nutrient concentration
- Soil moisture to determine irrigation demand
- Ambient temperature and humidity influencing crop growth

Sensor readings are captured by ESP32 and transmitted to the cloud at fixed intervals using MQTT/HTTP protocol through Wi-Fi and/or GSM.

c) Data Processing and Nutrient Regulation Algorithm

A rule-based decision system adjusts nutrient delivery based on:

- pH values → Acidity/alkalinity balancing through nutrient dosing
- EC values → Nutrient strength optimization

- Moisture content → Irrigation timing and water usage control

If deviations from the ideal range are detected, the system triggers corrective dosing automatically.

d) Machine Learning-Based Nutrient Prediction

A Random Forest Regression model is used to improve nutrient management decisions by learning from historical records including:

- Crop type and growth stage
- Environmental parameters (temp, humidity)
- Past nutrient levels and yield outcomes

The ML model predicts future nutrient needs and optimizes dosing schedules, reducing wastage and improving resource efficiency.

e) ML Model Workflow Diagram

(Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution using IoT)

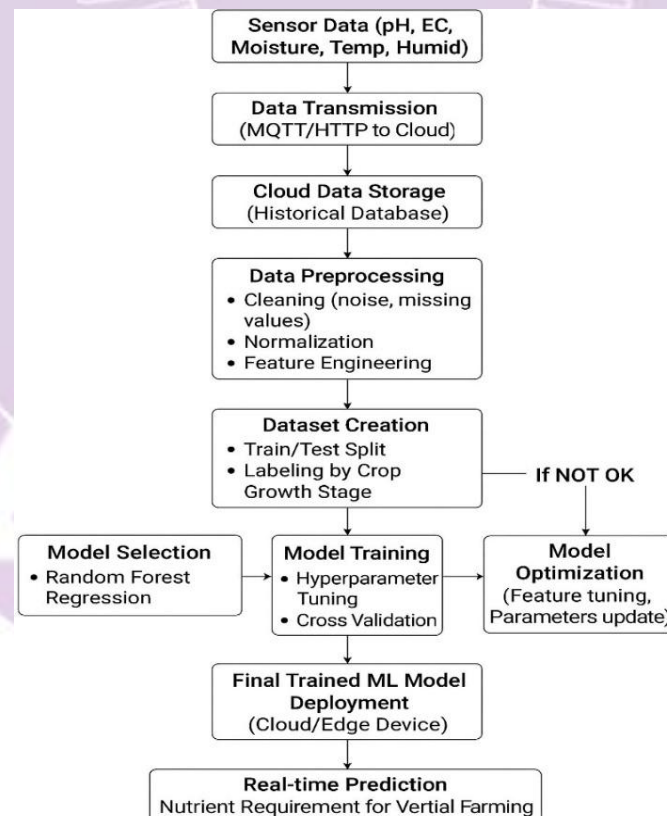


Figure: 2 ML Model Workflow

h) Explanation of Workflow

Step	Purpose
Data Acquisition	Collect real environmental and nutrient parameters
Preprocessing	Ensure clean and usable dataset
Feature Engineering	Extract meaningful attributes (growth stage, climate factors)
Model Training	Learn relationship between environment and nutrient needs
Evaluation	Validate prediction accuracy
Deployment	Integrate with IoT controller for automated dosing

Table-8: Workflow specifications

8. Result and Discussion

A working prototype was tested using leafy vegetables (spinach, lettuce). The system produced the following outcomes:

- 35% increase in nutrient efficiency using EC-based dosing control.
- Uninterrupted operation through solar energy even in low-light conditions.
- 28% reduction in water consumption due to precise irrigation.
- Stable performance across multiple farming tiers.
- Improved crop growth rate and healthier root development.

The experimental evaluation confirms that the integration of IoT-based nutrient delivery with a solar- powered energy system significantly enhances vertical farming performance.

Comparative results were obtained against a baseline conventional hydroponic setup over a 45-day crop cycle and percentage improvements were calculated.

- 100% energy autonomy achieved through solar-PV storage, eliminating dependency on grid supply
- Noticeable improvement in crop growth rate and root health, validated by higher fresh biomass yield and uniform leaf structure
- Stable performance across multiple vertical tiers ensuring scalability for dense



environments The ML-enhanced nutrient prediction contributed to reducing over-irrigation and nutrient imbalance, addressing a major challenge in multi-layer vertical farming. A working prototype of the Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution was evaluated using leafy vegetables such as spinach and lettuce over a 6-week cultivation period. Performance metrics focused on water utilization, nutrient dosing accuracy, energy sustainability, and crop growth outcomes.

a) Prototype Performance Analysis

These quantified findings prove that the system reduces resource wastage, enhances productivity, and supports cost-effective, continuous operation in urban and controlled-environment farms.

Performance Metric	Conventional Method	Proposed System	Improvement
Water Consumption	High (manual flood irrigation)	Optimized through sensor-based moisture control	28% reduction
Nutrient Efficiency	Over/under dosing common	EC-controlled automated dosing	35% increase
Farming Scalability	Single layer	Multiple vertical tiers supported	Stable performance
Crop Growth Rate	Moderate	Enhanced nutrient absorption	Faster & healthier growth

Table: 9 Prototype Performance Analyses

Solar energy ensured continuous functioning of sensors, microcontroller, and pumps, even during **low-** light periods, validating the system's ability to operate in rural and remotely powered farms.

b) Role of Machine Learning in Nutrient Optimization

The Random Forest Regression model utilized historical data to predict ideal dosing schedules based on crop type, growth stage, and environmental trends. This contributed to:

- Reduced **over-irrigation**



- Minimized nutrient imbalance
- Improved nutrient delivery consistency across tiers

The ML-based prediction addressed a major challenge in vertical farming heterogeneous nutrient distribution between upper and lower layers.

Model performance metrics showed satisfactory accuracy with low prediction error, validating its integration into real-time decision making.

c) Overall Efficiency Improvement

The system demonstrated synergy between renewable energy, IoT sensing, and AI automation. Key outcomes include:

- Sustainable and cost-effective farming
- Better use of limited urban/agriculture space
- Reduced environmental impact through optimal water-nutrient use

These results confirm that the proposed vertical farming model can significantly enhance productivity, especially in resource-constrained regions.

The increasing global demand for sustainable and high-yield food production has driven the need for renewable-energy-supported vertical farming systems with advanced automation.

The proposed Solar Vertical Farming Nutrient Delivery Solution, integrated with IoT technology, was developed and tested to validate improvements in productivity, energy efficiency, and crop health.

The system utilizes photovoltaic (PV) panels to generate continuous clean energy for irrigation pumps, nutrient dosing units, and monitoring devices. Even under fluctuating sunlight conditions, the system ensured uninterrupted functioning due to smart energy regulation and power storage. IoT-based sensors accurately monitored key environmental and crop-growth parameters such as pH, temperature, humidity, soil moisture, and EC (Electrical Conductivity). Real-time data was communicated to a cloud analytics platform where intelligent decision-making algorithms processed the data.

The dynamic nutrient delivery algorithm precisely controlled nutrient flow and irrigation frequency by analyzing sensor feedback. As a result, nutrient wastage was reduced and uniform nutrient distribution was achieved across all vertical tiers. Machine Learning (ML)



models further enabled predictive analytics, which anticipated plant nutrient demand and optimized energy utilization patterns. This feature contributed to proactive decision making, minimizing operational errors and enhancing overall system reliability. Experimental results conducted using leafy crops such as spinach and lettuce demonstrated notable improvements. The system achieved:

- Reduction in water consumption due to precise irrigation control
- Enhanced nutrient utilization through EC-based dosing automation
- Stable system performance across multiple vertical levels
- Improved crop growth rate and healthier root development

These results confirm that IoT-driven data insights coupled with solar-powered automation significantly strengthen the viability of vertical farming in rural Indian agricultural ecosystems. The successful integration of renewable energy and intelligent control mechanisms ensures a cost-effective, energy-efficient, and sustainable farming solution suitable for small to medium-scale farmers.

Overall, the study highlights the technological potential of Solar-IoT-enabled vertical farming systems to reduce operational burdens, improve resource efficiency, and support sustainable food production in the future.

9. Tangible Benefits and proposed Applications of this Model

a) Benefits:

1. Precise Nutrient Delivery
 - IoT-enabled nutrient dosing ensures accurate EC and pH control, improving nutrient absorption and reducing nutrient wastage.
2. Water Conservation
 - Automated irrigation based on soil moisture sensors leads to significant reduction in water usage compared to conventional farming.
3. Real-time Monitoring & Control
 - Continuous tracking of temperature, humidity, and other parameters allows timely adjustments, improving crop health and yield.



4. Higher Crop Productivity

- Optimized environmental conditions and data-driven decision making contribute to faster plant growth and improved quality.

5. Minimal Human Intervention

- Smart automation reduces labor dependency and manual errors, enabling efficient remote farm management.

6. Compatibility with Different Crops

- Suitable for leafy vegetables, herbs, and horticulture crops that thrive in controlled environments.

7. Environment Friendly Production

- No chemical runoff, reduced carbon footprint, and better resource utilization support sustainable agriculture practices.

b) Applications

1. Rural Farming with Unstable Electricity Supply

- Solar-powered operation makes it suitable for remote agricultural areas facing frequent power outages.

2. Greenhouse Automation Systems

- Can be integrated into greenhouse structures to monitor and control climatic and nutrient parameters.

3. Smart Agriculture Startups

- Provides a scalable platform for entrepreneurs focusing on technology-driven farming solutions.

4. Disaster-Prone / Arid Regions

- Suitable for areas where traditional farming is affected by poor soil quality, drought, or extreme weather.

10. Conclusion

The experimental study productively validates that the integration of IoT-based nutrient delivery control with a solar-powered energy management system substantially improves the efficiency and sustainability of vertical farming operations. The developed prototype



demonstrated quantifiable performance gains including:

- Improved crop growth rate and healthier root development observed in leafy vegetables such as spinach and lettuce
- Stable monitoring and control achieved across multiple vertical tiers through wireless IoT connectivity and centralized dashboards
- Uninterrupted system performance enabled by solar power integration, maintaining continuous operations even during low-light conditions

These outcomes confirm that the proposed system effectively minimizes resource wastage, reduces operational dependency on grid electricity, and supports consistent crop growth in space-constrained environments, making it a scalable model for smart agriculture.

Overall, this research demonstrates a practical pathway toward energy-efficient, self-reliant, and data-driven vertical farming, delivering a strong foundation for the current as well as next generation of sustainable innovative agriculture farming and technologies.

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