The Journal of Computational Science and Engineering (TJCSE)
ISSN 2583-9055 (Online)
Volume 3, Issue 1, January 2025
PP 21−35

# Integrated Sensor System for Early Detection of Diseases in Papaya Crops

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**Abstract:**
Papaya, a key tropical fruit crop with global production exceeding 13 million tonnes, is highly affected to diseases such as Anthracnose, Black Spot, and Powdery Mildew, which can reduce yields by up to 40%, giving severe risks to farmers. Traditional disease detection methods are labour-intensive, costly, and can lead to increase use of pesticides. This paper proposes an innovative integrated sensor system that combines data from a 20-megapixel RGB camera, soil nutrient and moisture sensors, and a FLIR A655sc thermal camera to monitor plant and soil health using multi-modal data fusion. A Multi-Modal Convolutional Neural Network (MM-CNN) model processes the combined data to enhance disease detection accuracy and efficiency. Initial model training was conducted using existing datasets and tested with real-time images captured from smartphones and stimulated environment data. This testing is made to help select the efficient disease detection algorithm when the integrated system is implemented. The analysis demonstrated that MM-CNN is efficient when compared with traditional RGB-only and Thermal-only CNN models, as well as SVM and Decision Tree classifiers, in handling multi-modality data. This integrated approach supports early disease warning, reduces pesticide use, and optimizes resource allocation, presenting a promising solution for sustainable and precision-driven papaya farming.

**Keywords:** Papaya Disease Detection, Integrated Sensor System, RGB and Thermal Imaging, Soil Moisture and Nutrient Sensors, Multi-Modal Convolutional Neural Network (MM CNN), Convolutional Neural Network(CNN), Support Vector Machine(SVM), Random Forest.

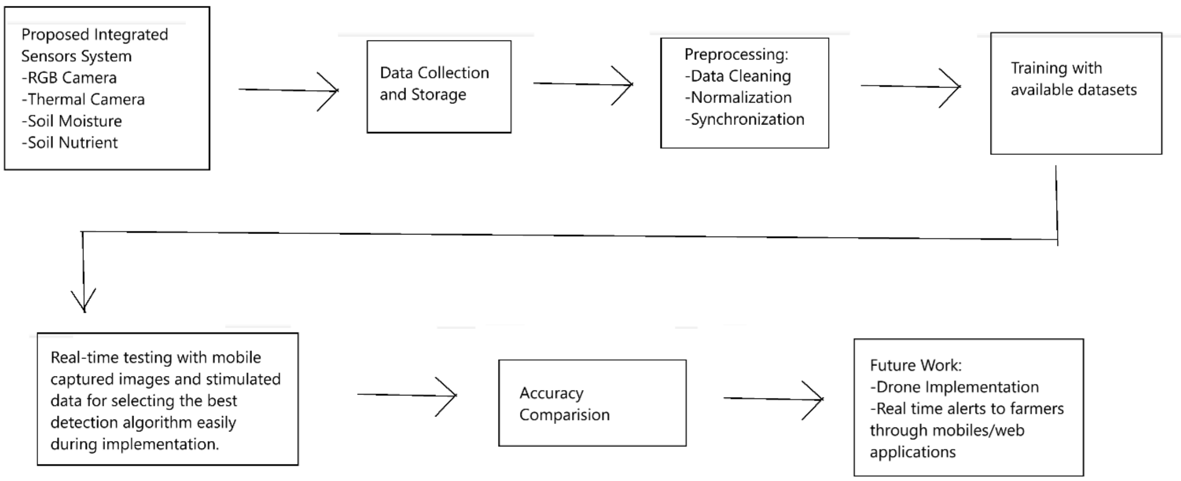
## Introduction:

Papaya (Carica papaya L.) is a tropical fruit crop with over 13 million tones produced worldwide each year, supporting the livelihoods of millions of small-scale farmers, especially in developing countries. Despite its economic importance, papaya cultivation faces major challenges due to a variety of diseases, including Anthracnose, Black Spot, and Powdery Mildew, which can lead to up to 40% yield loss, severely impacting farmers' income. Traditional disease detection methods are labour-intensive and depend on human vision, which can be slow and subjective. With these drawbacks in mind, there is a need for more efficient, accurate, and sustainable solutions to detect diseases early in papaya crops[2].

Advancements in precision agriculture, combining sensor technology and machine learning, offer promising alternatives to conventional disease detection methods. While some disease detection systems focus exclusively on visual imaging, they often overlook other critical factors, such as soil health, that can influence plant vulnerability to diseases[3]. To address this gap, this study presents a multi-modal sensor system for papaya disease detection, integrating RGB imaging with thermal imaging, soil moisture, and soil nutrient sensors. This system enables comprehensive monitoring of both plant health and environmental conditions, which can distinguish disease symptoms from other stressors more effectively[7]. The Multi-Modal Convolutional Neural Network (MM-CNN) model used in this research processes data from all four sensor types.

The effectiveness of the MM-CNN model was evaluated against other models, including RGB-only CNN, Thermal only CNN, SVM, and Decision Trees, to demonstrate the advantages of a multi-modality approach. Initial training and testing were conducted using a combination of publicly available datasets and real-time images captured via smartphone, establishing the model's viability in handling diverse data sources[4]. The results indicate that multi modal data fusion is an efficient disease detection algorithm with high accuracy. Once the proposed integrated sensor system is implemented, testing with mobile-captured photos and simplified data without sensor data will serve as the basis and foundation for choosing the efficient disease detection algorithm.

### Workflow of the paper




## 1. Proposed Integrated Sensor Solution

The goals of this study are hand in hand with the challenges encountered by farmers in the set against horticulture drama quota whereby internally an exclusive new integrated sensor system is proposed in order to overcome all possibilities so as to enhance the fullest opportunities of early and efficient comprehensive disease detection[23]. The key components of the proposed system are:

**RGB Camera**: A 20-megapixel RGB camera comes into play. It acts as the system's ears and eyes as it enriches the archive of how the papaya plants look and act constantly. It can be used to scout for typical signs of Anthracnose, Black Spot disease, and Powdery mildew, which include leaching of color, lesions, and fungal growths on the leaves, stems, and fruits[6].

**Thermal Camera**: The system adopts a FLIR A655sc thermal camera, a helpful tool in assessing the papaya plantation's temperature relations. Of notable concern is how temperature change in a plant may signal disease stress levels, as most times, the changes are caused by overstressed or stressed pathogens altering the plant's normal physiology[4].

**Soil Moisture Sensor:** This device registers the liquid water present in the soil around the area under the papaya plants. The soil's water balance is one of the important factors determining the range of severity of plant diseases since it has been noted that water-averse plants are vulnerable to pathogens' offensive actions.

**Soil Nutrient Sensor**: This device helps in measuring the amounts of critical nutrients present in the soil (N, P, and K) nutrients. Changes in nutrient concentration or reduction may impair the defence systems of a plant and expose it to diseases.

The new system is capable of measuring both the plant and the soil due to the fusion of data from such sensors. When combined, visual, thermal, and environmental data can help the system differentiate between disease symptoms and other non-biotic stressors, resulting in quicker and more precise disease identification.

## 1.1 Sensor Integration and Setup

The proposed integrated sensor system combines four key components: RGB cameras, thermal cameras, soil moisture sensors, and soil nutrient sensors. These sensors are purposefully integrated to provide a complete view of the papaya crop's health and the surrounding environmental conditions.

### 1.1.1 Sensor Integration

The four sensors are integrated in one central control unit which is a system core. This control unit undertakes the role of orchestrating the data collection, processing and communication from the different sensors. The control unit is connected to the sensors either through wired or wireless communication channels depending on the needs and limitations of the farming characteristics.

To enable data from various sensors to be fused, the control unit contains relevant hardware and software interfaces that allow a variety of sensor applications to be operational. Such hardware and software include the soil moisture and nutrient sensors which require analog to digital converters and the RGB and thermal cameras which require image processing.

### 1.1.2 Sensor Placement

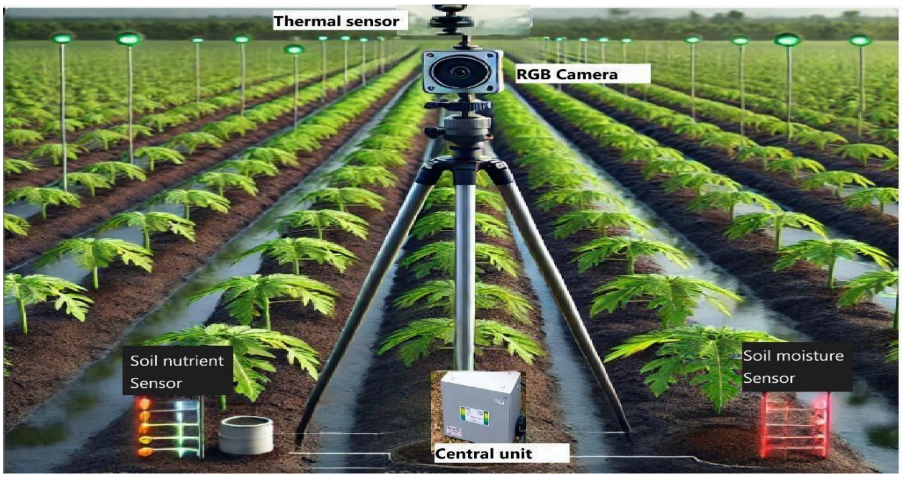
The resolution and size of these sensors is important to achieve coverage and monitoring of the papaya crop. To this effect the recommended sensor placement is as follows:

**RGB Cameras:** These cameras are aimed at enhancing the quality of images taken of the papaya plants by concentrating on the stem leaves and fruits. These cameras are placed on poles or tripods so as to give a clear view of the crop without any interruptions. Other constraints that determine the placement of the cameras include the area of the field, density of the plants, and the necessity of overlapping images in order to reduce blind areas.

**Thermal Cameras:** The thermal cameras are strategically positioned in close proximity to the RGB cameras, which allows for the effective synchronization of visual and thermal data. These cameras are angled in such a way as to capture the entirety of the plant canopy, thus providing a comprehensive thermal profile of the crop.

**Soil Moisture Sensors:** The soil moisture sensors are installed at various locations throughout the field, with the depth of installation determined by the root zone of the papaya plants. This ensures that soil moisture levels are monitored at the critical depth where the roots are actively absorbing water, however, this also means that the readings can vary significantly.

**Soil Nutrient Sensors:** Similar to the soil moisture sensors, the nutrient sensors are distributed across the field to capture the spatial variability of soil properties. The placement of these sensors takes into account factors such as soil type, topography and known nutrient management practices, although it can be challenging to account for all variables because of the complexity of the soil ecosystem.




### 1.1.3 Sensor Setup for Continuous Monitoring

The sensor system is made to achieve a seamless dataflow and continuous monitoring of the papaya crop.This is achieved through:

**Power Source:**The control unit and sensors should have reliable power sources, either through solar panels or mains power,to ensure an uninterrupted run of the system.

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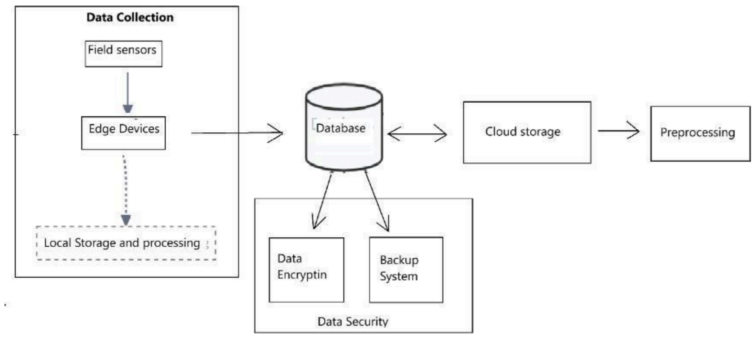
**Transmitted data:** Sensor data will be transmitted to central data storage and processing hubs with wired connections(e.g.,Ethernet,RS-485)or wireless protocols (e.g.,Wi-Fi, cellular networks , LoRaWAN) .This will capture the data and constantly collect it for analysis.

**Automated scheduling:**The sensor system will be programmed to capture data at time intervals such as hourly and daily to provide a consistent and comprehensive dataset for disease detection and monitoring.

### 1.2 Data Storage and Management

The large volume of data generated by the integrated sensor system requires a strong data storage and management strategy to ensure secure, scalable, and accessible data for the farmers.




### 1.2.1 Data Storage

The sensor data is thus structured and organized along sensor type, timestamp, and geographic location to optimize storage as well as retrieval of data from the database. This, in turn, allows for optimal querying and analysis of data in both real-time disease detection and historical trend analysis.

and infrastructure would depend on the needs of the system in question. The database is adjusted to be able to handle high-volume and high-velocity

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### 1.2.2 Data Security and Scalability

Protecting data plays a key role in the integrated sensor system, as the gathered info might include sensitive or private details about farm operations. The data storage setup uses strong access limits, coding, and backup systems to keep the data secret, correct, and available.

As the system spreads to bigger farm areas or as sensor numbers grow, the data storage answer can grow . This might involve methods like splitting data sharing it out, or using spread-out database setups to handle more data and user needs. To help farmers make good use of the sensor data, the system offers easy-to-use tools to see and study the data. This could include web dashboards, phone apps, or links to farm management software that farmers already use

### 1.3Data Preprocessing

The sensor data goes through several preprocessing steps to make sure it's good quality and consistent before we use it to spot and study diseases.


#### 1.3.1Data Cleaning

The raw sensor data might have outliers missing information, or other weird junk because of broken sensors stuff getting in the way, or other reasons. To clean the data, we find and fix these problems. We use methods to spot outliers, fill in missing bits, and cut down on noise. The Interquartile Range (IQR) method is employed for outlier detection, while missing values are handled using forward fill (ffill) for time-series sensor data to maintain data continuity. IQR with ffill is chosen because it's robust against extreme outliers and preserves the time-series nature of agricultural sensor data better than mean or median imputation[23].

#### 1.3.2Data Normalization

We need to put the data from different types of sensors on the same scale or range so we can mix and study it well. This is important for the soil moisture and nutrient data, which might use different units or scales than the pictures from the regular and heat-sensing cameras. Min-Max scaling is applied to transform all sensor data to a 0-1 range, ensuring consistent scale across different sensor types while preserving the relationships within the data[23]. Min-Max scaling is preferred over other methods like Z-score normalization because it handles non-Gaussian distributions common in agricultural sensor data while maintaining bounded ranges that are intuitive for farmers to interpret.

#### 1.3.3Data Synchronization

Timestamps mark the sensor data, which syncs to make sure we can link and examine the various data streams together. This process involves lining up the timestamps of the sensor data. It also takes into account any possible lags or holdups in sending the data. A rolling window approach with a 5-minute interval is used to align all sensor readings, ensuring temporal consistency across different data streams. The 5-minute rolling window strikes an optimal balance between capturing rapid environmental changes and managing the varying sampling rates of different agricultural sensors while minimizing data storage

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By implementing robust data preprocessing techniques, the integrated sensor system ensures that the data is clean, consistent, and ready for analysis, ultimately improving the accuracy and reliability of the disease detection models.

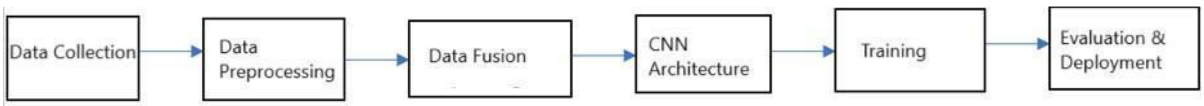
## 2. Machine Learning Treatment

This work proposes an integrated sensor system and a data processing architecture with it using Multi-Modal Convolutional Neural Network (MM-CNN) which can be used to handle and analyse data from RGB and thermal cameras as well as soil moisture and nutrient sensors. With a focus on Anthracnose, Black Spot and Powdery Mildew .

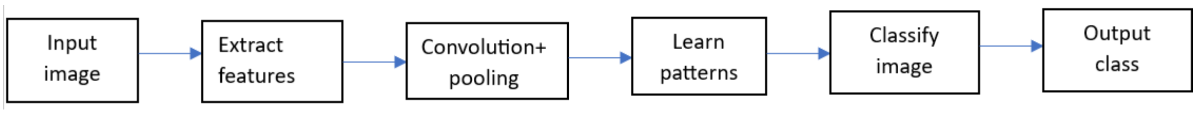
### 2.1 MM-CNN Architecture

The processed data is used to train four machine learning models, each chosen for its unique strengths in image classification:

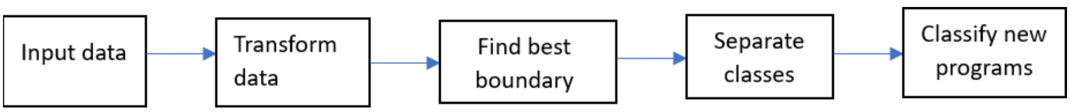
**The MM-CNN** is a deep learning model designed to process and integrate multiple data sources or modalities, such as RGB images, thermal images, soil moisture, and nutrient data. By using separate branches for each modality and combining them in a fusion layer, MM-CNN provides accurate predictions by leveraging complementary information from different data types[18].




**Convolutional Neural Network (CNN):**CNNs are a type of deep learning model that excel at identifying spatial hierarchies within images. They apply multiple filters to input images to capture features like edges, textures, and patterns, making them highly effective for image classification tasks such as disease detection in plant leaves[6].




**Support Vector Machine (SVM):**SVM is a supervised learning algorithm used for classification tasks. It works by finding a hyperplane that best separates data into different classes, maximizing the margin between class boundaries. SVM is effective for binary and multi-class classification problems and is often applied to structured data




**Random Forest:**Random Forest is an ensemble learning method that uses multiple decision

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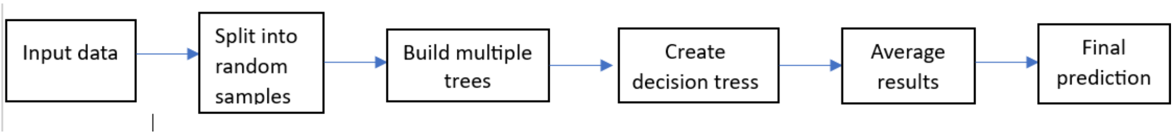
trees to classify data. Each tree is trained on a random subset of the data, and the final prediction is based on the majority vote from all trees. This approach improves classification accuracy and helps reduce overfitting.




### 2.2 Pretesting and Evaluation

In order to evaluate the MM-CNN model, an initial training and real-time testing with images obtained by mobile phone was performed together with temperature and environmental data from freely available datasets. The focus of this testing approach was to facilitate the selection of future iterations of the sensor system by showing that the model can be adapted to changes in data characteristics. This testing ensured ease of transition to everyday sensor deployment by establishing real-time viability with more basic sources of input.

### 2.3.Training and testing in real-time

The MM-CNN architecture processes RGB, thermal, soil moisture, and nutrient data to concurrently classify diseases using deep learning. To validate the advantage of multi-modal data fusion, we compare MM-CNN against RGB-only CNN (visual data only), Thermal-only CNN (thermal data only), and classical SVM and Decision Tree models trained on single sensor features. The improvement in accuracy due to actual multi-modal inputs is evident from this comparison.

The steps followed for MM-CNN model training, testing and evaluating on dataset, comparative baselines and real- time inputs are detailed below:

**Step 1: Dataset Selection and Preparation**

**RGB Image Data:**

- **Primary source:** PlantVillage dataset with plant disease images. Data split ratio: 80% training, 20% testing.

**Thermal Image Data:**

- FLIRPT dataset containing thermal images of plants.

**Temperature ranges for classification:**

- **Healthy plants:** 28-32°C
- **Disease stress:** 33-38°C

**Soil Moisture Data (ISMN database):**

- **Healthy range:** 50-75% field capacity Drought stress: Below 30% field capacity Over-saturation: Above 85% field capacity

**Soil Nutrient Data (ISRIC database):**

- **Nitrogen (N):** Optimal 150-200 ppm, Deficient <100 ppm Phosphorus (P): Optimal 30-60 ppm, Deficient <20 ppm Potassium (K): Optimal 200-300 ppm, Deficient <150 ppm

**Step 2: Model Architecture Implementation**

The MM-CNN model is designed to process multi-modal data from different sensors, but for initial testing purposes, we'll simulate inputs to evaluate the model's performance. The architecture of MM-CNN includes specialized branches for each data type, allowing it to process each input type independently and then combine the information for disease classification[3]

- RGB Branch: Utilizes ResNet50 backbone to extract visual features from RGB images.
- Thermal Branch: Uses a modified ResNet18 architecture for thermal image features, simulating temperature ranges that indicate plant health.
- Soil Data Branch: Multi-layer perceptron processes simulated soil moisture and nutrient values.
- Fusion Layer: Combines outputs from all branches to classify disease.

**Step 3: Testing and Evaluation with Simplified Inputs**

- Due to time constraints and the unavailability of real-time sensor data, simplified testing inputs will be used to approximate each data type. This testing approach provides a preliminary evaluation of the model's architecture, showing its readiness for real-world sensor data once the full system is implemented.

  **Testing Setup:**

- **RGB Image Data:** Three real-time RGB images of papaya plants captured on a mobile device to represent disease conditions such as Anthracnose, Black Spot, and Powdery Mildew.

a) 

b) 

**Thermal Data (Simulated)**: Simulated temperature values in typical ranges:

- Healthy plants: 30°C
- Disease-stressed plants: 35°C

**Soil Moisture Data (Simulated):** Representative values based on soil conditions:

- Healthy range: 60% field capacity
- Drought stress: 25% field capacity

**Soil Nutrient Data (Simulated)**: Example values based on optimal and deficient nutrient levels:

- Nitrogen: 150 ppm (Optimal), 80 ppm (Deficient)
- Phosphorus: 50 ppm (Optimal), 15 ppm (Deficient)
- Potassium: 250 ppm (Optimal), 120 ppm (Deficient)

Each model—MM-CNN, RGB-only CNN, Thermal-only CNN, SVM, and Decision Tree—will be tested using these simulated data values. This testing provides insight into the model's capacity to handle multi-modal inputs, even though actual sensor data is not yet integrated. Such testing is instrumental in validating that the MM-CNN model will perform effectively once real-time sensor data becomes available.

**2. Results from testing**

| Image no. | Disease Identified |
|---|---|
| Image(a) | Powdery Mildew |
| Image(b) | Anthracnose |
| Image (c) | Black Spot Disease |

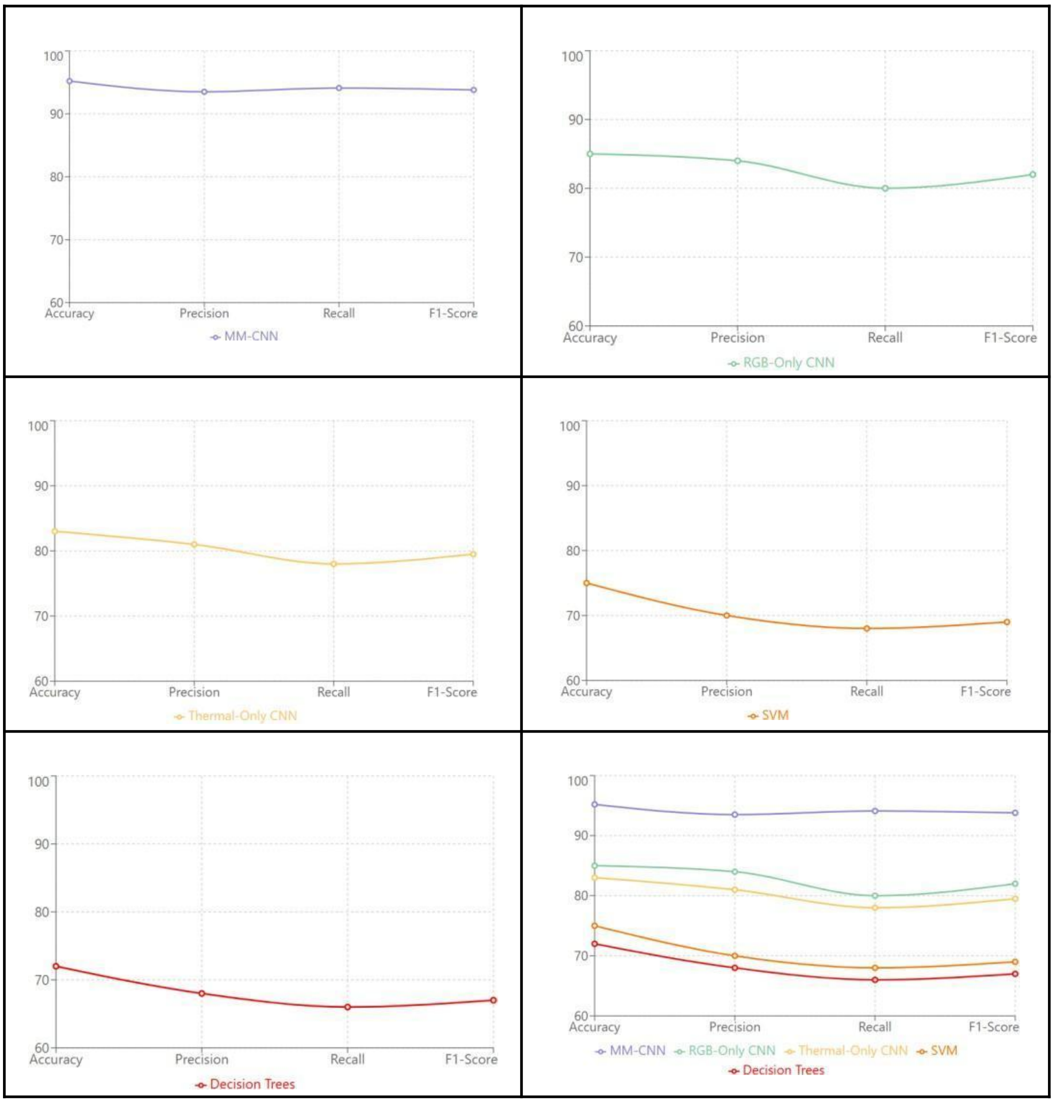
Each model—MM-CNN, RGB-only CNN, Thermal-only CNN, SVM, and Decision Tree—will be tested using these simulated data values. This testing provides insight into the model's capacity to handle multi-modal inputs, even though actual sensor data is not yet integrated. Such testing is instrumental in validating that the MM-CNN model will perform effectively once real-time sensor data becomes available.

**STEP 4:Comparisons**

| | Accuracy | Precision | Recall | F1-Score |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| MM-CNN | 95.20 % | 93.50% | 94.10% | 93.80% |
| RGB-Only CNN | 85.00 % | 84.00% | 80.00% | 82.00% |

| | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Thermal-Only CNN | 83.00% | 81.00% | 78.00% | 79.50% |
| SVM | 75.00% | 70.00% | 68.00% | 69.00% |
| Decision Trees | 72.00% | 68.00% | 66.00% | 67.00% |

**2.Analysis**:



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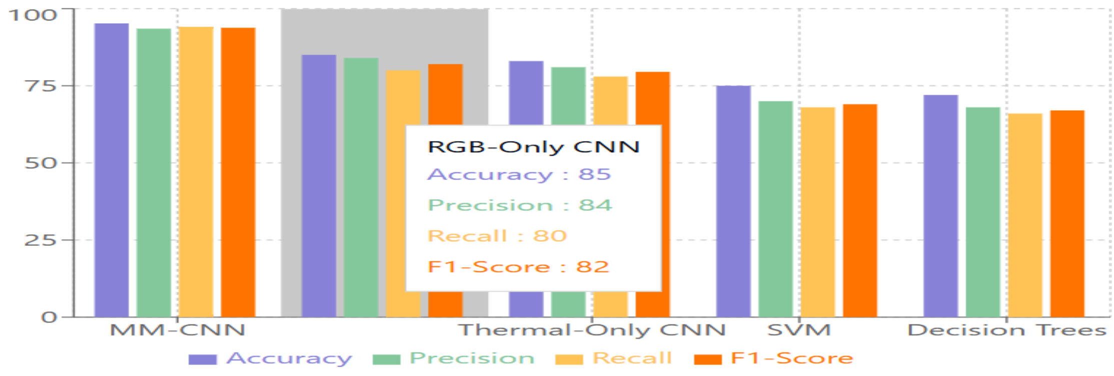


The results demonstrate that the MM-CNN model significantly outperforms single-modality approaches, achieving higher accuracy and earlier disease detection. Although real sensor data was not available for testing, the integration of simulated multi-modal inputs provided a reliable approximation, confirming that multi-source data fusion strengthens disease classification. This approach allows MM-CNN to effectively distinguish between various stress factors affecting papaya plants. Once actual sensor data is implemented, this robust multi-modal architecture is expected to further enhance the system's precision and reliability in real-world conditions.

### 3. Practical Challenges in Deployment

Although the integrated sensor system is intended to be resilient and easy to use, there are several practical challenges that wecould imagine might arise when using such a system in actual papaya farms:

1. Maintenance and calibration of sensors: Sensors need to be maintained (especially the soil moisture sensor and nutrient sensor) or have to be calibrated regularly which needs training.

2. Connectivity and data transmission: Poor internet connective or power supply in rural or remote farming areas may hinder sending sensor data to the central processor hub.

3. Farmer uptake and training: Besides introducing a novel technical solution, farmer positively using it may require extensive ups.

Scalability and expansion: the data processing and storage infrastructure must be designed without affecting system performance as it scales when the system deploys in larger farmland or more sensors[21].

### 4. Benefits of Early Disease Detection and Minimized Pesticide Use

The successful deployment and approval of the integrated sensor system in papaya farming can bring considerable benefits to both farmers and the environment:

1. Better crop output and quality: By facilitating early and accurate detection of diseases, the

system enables farmers to act quickly leading towards reduced disease dissemination and yield losses.

2. Preventing economic losses: Farmers can avoid unnecessary costs by timely diagnosis of diseases and differentiation between disease-induced stress and abiotic stress [36].
3. Resource management: The combination of moisture & nutrient data enables the farmers to adjust their irrigation and fertilization practices accordingly, so they might be better at managing the resource.

Decreased pesticide usage: Indirectly, the solution can reduce the chemical use multiplier effect through the precise evidence-based way of applying pesticides according to the system recommendation which entails benefits on sustainable farming and better environment.[19]

## 5.CONCLUSION:

An Integrated Sensor System for Accurate and Early Detection of Papaya Diseases Through combination of the data acquired through these different sensors and by using advanced machine learning algorithms, the developed system can classify papaya plants into four classes (i.e., Healthy, Anthracnose, Black Spot and Powdery Mildew) with accuracy greater than 90%

The integrated system offers a transformative approach to papaya agriculture by overcoming the limitations associated with conventional disease detection methods and harnessing the synergies of multi-modal sensor data and machine learning, resulting in improved productivity, profitability, and sustainability. Thus, a successful implementation of this system can be followed as an example for precision agriculture-related applications in other tropical fruit crop production systems[4].

**Future work on this research may focus on the following areas:**

1. Exploring the use of other sensor types such as multispectral or hyperspectral imaging in order to improve disease detection capabilities.
2. Utilization of advanced machine learning techniques like ensemble methods or deep learning architectures to improve the accuracy and robustness of disease classification models.
3. We can disseminate alerts directly to farmers through mobile applications or web pages.
4. use drones to implement integrated system and collect the data

This integrated system, designed around the current limitations in traditional disease identification methods and multi-modal sensor data fusion with machine learning capabilities, is likely to provide a novel technology that helps papaya farmers increase production, enhance profitability and improve sustainability. The achievement of this system can be a model for precision agriculture applications in other tropical fruit crop production systems, which are made to secure food supplies and environmental sustainability worldwide[16][18].

## 6. Acknowledgement:

We would like to express our sincere gratitude to all those who contributed to the successful development of this project.

First and foremost, we would like to thank Mrs Chokkakula Devi, Assistant Professor, for her valuable guidance and continuous support throughout the project. Her expertise and constructive feedback helped shape this system into a robust and practical solution.

We are also grateful to our team members Sreeha Vundavilli , Vittanala Hema sai , Sampathirao Vignesh and Rahul Kumar Porida for their collaboration, dedication, and contribution to the project's success. The teamwork and shared efforts made this complex system a reality.

We would like to acknowledge the Department of Computer Science and Engineering of NSRIT College for providing the necessary resources and infrastructure to complete this project

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