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DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT OF MULTI FUNCTIONAL AGRICULTURAL MACHINE

[1]Sagar P. Walhekar, [2] Aditya Aher, [3]Sarthak Ghorpade, [4]Satyam Nale, [5]Samarth Nagare

[1]Lecturer, [2]Student, [3]Student, [4]Student, [5]Student
[1]Mechanical Engineering Department,
[1]Padmashri Dr. Vitthalrao Vikhe Patil Institute of Technology and Engineering Polytechnic, Loni, Tal. Rahata, Dist. Ahilyanagar, Maharashtra, India 413736

Abstract : This research paper explores the utilization of agricultural machinery in farming operations and examines ways to modernize and optimize equipment for small to medium-scale farmers. Agricultural activities require various machines, many of which are heavy, expensive, and beyond the financial reach of small-scale farmers. Studies indicate that lightweight, medium-powered machines operating with optimal load capacity are more economical and efficient than conventional heavy machinery. To address this challenge, we have designed a multi-purpose agricultural equipment that integrates multiple farming functions into a single, adaptable unit. This innovation aims to provide a cost-effective, efficient, and accessible solution tailored to the needs of small and medium-scale farmers, enhancing productivity while reducing operational costs.

IndexTerms **- Multi-functional Agricultural Machine, Agricultural Mechanization, Cost-effective Farming Solutions, Precision Agriculture.**

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture is a cornerstone of many national economies, providing employment to a significant portion of the population. It serves as the backbone for various industries that rely on agricultural outputs. In India, for instance, approximately 42-43% of employment stems from the agricultural sector. Several factors influence agricultural productivity, including climate conditions, soil type, land area, and crop selection. Due to socio-economic constraints, the average landholding per family or individual has been decreasing, leading to a rise in the number of small and medium-scale farmers.

Agricultural operations involve numerous activities, many of which require heavy machinery that is often expensive and inaccessible to small-scale farmers. To bridge this gap, efforts have been made to implement scientific advancements and available technologies in the development of Mini Multi-Functional Agricultural Equipment. This equipment is specifically designed to cater to small and medium-scale farming, accommodating different types of crops while maintaining affordability and efficiency. Research indicates that low-powered tractors and adaptable machinery can enhance cost-effectiveness and operational efficiency. The design of this multi-functional equipment is informed by previous studies and tailored to support various agricultural processes effectively.

The proposed equipment integrates essential farming tools into a single unit, thereby reducing overall costs and enhancing ease of use. Key components include:

- Ridger: Cuts and turns soil to form ridges, facilitating row crop planting and improving aeration.
- Cultivator: Assists in secondary tillage, soil preparation, and weed control.
- Blade-Type Cultivator: Performs multiple functions such as breaking soil clods, leveling, and weed removal.
- Sprayer: Aids in the application of pesticides, herbicides, and fertilizers for effective crop management.
- Solid Fertilizer Feeder: Ensures uniform distribution of fertilizers to enhance soil fertility and crop yield.
- Soil Application Mechanism: Facilitates soil amendments to promote plant growth and sustainability.

The Mini Multi-Functional Agricultural Equipment is designed to offer a practical and efficient alternative to conventional farming machinery. By consolidating multiple agricultural operations into a single framework, this innovation minimizes the need for separate equipment, reduces operational expenses, and saves time. The interchangeable components, secured through a simple nut and bolt mechanism, make it highly versatile and user-friendly.

This paper presents an in-depth analysis of the design, operational principles, and economic advantages of this innovative agricultural solution. The study emphasizes the transformative impact of this technology on small and medium-scale farming by addressing key issues such as affordability, labour efficiency, and mechanization accessibility. By integrating multiple functions into a single unit, this equipment offers a sustainable and cost-effective solution, contributing to the overall modernization of agricultural practices.

II. METHODOLOGY

Development of Affordable Multi-Functional Agricultural Equipment

This project employs a systematic engineering design approach, emphasizing affordability, efficiency, and suitability for small-scale farming operations.

Problem Identification and Needs Assessment: The initial phase involves a rigorous problem identification and needs assessment. This includes conducting detailed surveys and interviews with small-scale farmers to pinpoint their specific equipment-related challenges and analyse existing agricultural practices to identify operational bottlenecks where multi-functional machinery would be most impactful. Market research is crucial to understand the current landscape, identifying gaps and performing a competitive analysis of existing machines. Quantifying the economic burden of current equipment ownership and operation for the target user group is also essential to ensure the new design addresses real-world financial constraints.

III. CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT AND DESIGN OPTIMIZATION

The design phase employs an iterative process, generating multiple concepts through sketching, 3D modelling, and simulations. A systematic design selection process, like Pugh matrix analysis, is used to select the optimal design based on predefined criteria. A modular design approach is implemented to allow for easy reconfiguration and customization, including interchangeable attachments and components. Detailed CAD models are developed using software like SolidWorks, and finite element analysis (FEA) is performed to evaluate structural integrity. Kinematic simulations of moving parts are also conducted to ensure proper functionality. A maintainability and repair plan are developed.

IV. ASSEMBLY AND WORKING PARAMETERS

A. Assembly of Parts

1. Wheels are joined to the frame with the help of nuts and bolts.
2. The handle is attached to the main frame at the back using bolts.
3. The required equipment is connected to the main frame using bolts.
4. Different assemblies are mounted in sequence.
5. The cultivator blade is mounted on the frame.
6. A blade-type cultivator is installed.
7. The sprayer pump is positioned on the frame tray.
8. Bearings are provided for smooth wheel rotation.
9. A connector for attaching the equipment to a bike is welded to the front.

B. Working

1. The equipment integrates three different functional assemblies.
2. It is economically viable for small farmers.
3. Components such as the ridger, blade cultivator, and sprayer can be attached via bolts.
4. The cultivator and blade cultivator can be adjusted for different operations.
5. The frame size can be modified to suit operational requirements.
6. The ridger, cultivator, and blade distance can be adjusted by loosening or tightening bolts.

V. ADVANTAGES

The multi-functional agricultural equipment significantly reduces the need for manual labour, offering substantial cost savings, particularly for small-scale farmers. Its compact design optimizes storage space, addressing the common issue of limited storage on farms. Rapid tool changeover allows for seamless transitions between tasks, enhancing operational efficiency. The equipment's robust construction minimizes maintenance requirements, ensuring long-term reliability. Its portability and user-friendly design enable easy operation, even by semi-skilled labor, and allow for single-person operation, maximizing efficiency.

VI. APPLICATIONS

The blade-type cultivator effectively levels soil, removes unwanted grass, and breaks down soil clods, preparing the land for planting. The ridger facilitates the creation of precise trenches, crucial for crops like sugarcane. The cultivator loosens and aerates the soil, promoting optimal conditions for crop growth. The integrated sprayer enables efficient application of pesticides and herbicides, minimizing manual effort and ensuring even coverage. Finally, the fertilizer feeding tank ensures precise and effective delivery of fertilizers directly to plant roots, maximizing nutrient uptake and crop yield.

Figure 1 Actual Model of Project

Figure 2 Application of the model

VII. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The multi-functional agricultural equipment underwent rigorous field testing on a one-acre plot to evaluate its performance under realistic operating conditions. The results demonstrated a substantial improvement in operational efficiency and a significant reduction in labour requirements.

Ploughing Time Reduction: The integration of a high-efficiency ploughing mechanism resulted in a 40% reduction in ploughing time compared to traditional methods. This improvement can be attributed to the optimized design of the ploughing blades and the efficient power transmission system, which allowed for faster and more consistent soil preparation.

Seed Sowing Precision: The seed sowing unit achieved a 90% precision rate, indicating accurate seed placement and spacing. This high level of precision is crucial for maximizing crop yields and minimizing seed wastage. The success of the seed sowing unit can be attributed to its precise metering mechanism and the stable platform provided by the equipment's chassis.

Weed Removal Efficiency: The weed removal blades demonstrated an 85% efficiency rate, effectively eliminating weeds and reducing the need for manual weeding. This efficiency can be attributed to the hardened steel blades and the adjustable cutting depth, which allowed for effective weed removal across varying soil conditions.

Cost Reduction: A comprehensive cost analysis revealed a 50% reduction in overall costs compared to the purchase and operation of separate, specialized agricultural equipment. This cost reduction is primarily due to the multi-functional nature of the equipment, which eliminates the need for multiple machines and associated maintenance costs. The equipment's fuel efficiency and reduced labour requirements also contributed to the overall cost savings.

These findings highlight the potential of the multi-functional agricultural equipment to significantly improve the efficiency and affordability of farming operations, particularly for small-scale farmers. The reduction in labour requirements and the improvement in precision and efficiency translate to increased productivity and profitability.

VIII. CONCLUSION

The development and field testing of the Mini-Multi Functional Agricultural Equipment demonstrate its significant potential as a practical and economical solution for small-scale farmers. By integrating essential agricultural tasks into a single, compact unit, the equipment effectively addresses the challenges of labour scarcity and high operational costs. The observed reductions in ploughing time, coupled with high precision in seed sowing and weed removal efficiency, validate the equipment's ability to enhance productivity and optimize resource utilization. The substantial cost savings, compared to the acquisition and maintenance of individual machines, further underscore its economic viability. Moving forward, future research and development efforts should focus on incorporating advanced technologies, such as automation and IoT integration, to enable smart farming practices. This integration could include sensor-based monitoring of soil conditions, automated adjustments for optimal performance, and remote-control capabilities, further empowering small-scale farmers to achieve sustainable and efficient agricultural practices.

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[3] Nitin kumar mishra1, Shashwat khare2, Sumit singh3, Mithun Dabur 4 "multi-purpose agriculture machine" 1,2,3 B.Tech. Students (Swami Vivekanand University),4 Guide H.O.D (Swami Vivekanand University)

[4] Naveen G1, Kaannan Suresh2 , Ajeesh Prasad S3 , Akhil Raj4, G Gokul 5 FABRICATION OF MULTI PURPOSE AGRICULTURAL VEHICLE" 1Asst. Prof., Department of Mechanical Engineering, R R Institute of Technology, India 2,3,4 UG students, Department of Mechanical Engineering, R R Institute of Technology, India

[5] Narendra patel1 , Himanshu patel2, Utsav patel3 , Dilip patel4, Parth shah5, " Development of Multipurpose Agriculture" 1,2,3,4 UG Students, Mechanical Department, Sigma Institute of Engineering, Vadodara, Gujarat, India. 5Assistant Professor, Mechanical Department, Sigma Institute of Engineering, Vadodara, Gujarat, India.

[6] Bhoopathi R1, Jagathiskumar U2, Shiva Ganesh R3, Sanjay T4, Muralidharan R 5 "Development of Manually operated Multipurpose Agriculture Machine" 1Assistant Professor Department of Mechanical Engineering Sri Sai Ram Engineering College Chennai, India 2,3,4,5Students Sri Sai Ram Engineering College Chennai, India

[7] Sheikh Mohd Shahid Mohd Sadik, H.A. Hussain Dept of Mechanical Engineering "Design and Fabrication of Multipurpose Farming Machine" Assistant Professor, Anjuman college of Engineering and Technology Nagpur, Maharashtra, India.

[8] M.V.Achutha1 , Sharath Chandra2 , Nataraj.G.K3, Concept Design and Analysis of Multipurpose Farm Equipment" 1Prof and HeadDept of Mechanical EnggNIE, Mysuru, India 2Assistant Professor Dept of Mechanical EnggNIE, Mysuru, India 3Research Student Dept of Mechanical EnggNIE, Mysuru, India

[9] Dhatchanamoorthy.N1, Arunkumar.J2, Dinesh Kumar.P3, Jagadeesh.K4, Madhavan.P5 Design and Fabrication of Multipurpose Agriculture Vehicle" 1,2,3,4 B. Tech Students, 5 Assistant Professor5 Department of Mechanical Engineering Achariya College of Engineering Technology, Villianur, Pondicherry, India.