International Journal of Engineering and Techniques - Volume 12 Issue 3, May-June - 2026

Federated Learning-Based Privacy-Preserving Crop Disease Detection Using MobileNetV2 and Grad-CAM

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Abstract —Crop diseases substantially reduce agricultural productivity and compromise food security by lowering both yields and produce quality. Timely and accurate disease diagnosis is therefore vital for effective crop management; However, conventional deep learning methods typically depend on centralized data collection, which creates concerns related to privacy, security, and data ownership. To overcome these limitations, this research presents a privacy-preserving crop disease detection framework built on Federated Learning, MobileNetV2, and Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM). The framework supports collaborative training across multiple distributed clients without exchanging raw agricultural data. Crop leaf images from the Crop Disease Detection Dataset were preprocessed and allocated among federated clients to emulate heterogeneous real-world agricultural settings. MobileNetV2 was selected as the classification backbone because of its lightweight design and computational efficiency, while the Federated Averaging algorithm was applied to combine local model updates into a global model. In addition, Grad-CAM was incorporated to generate visual explanations by emphasizing disease-affected regions that influence model predictions. Experimental results confirmed the effectiveness of the proposed approach, with an accuracy of 95.93%, precision of 96.13%, recall of 95.93%, and F1-score of 95.94%. These findings show that the system preserves strong classification performance even under non-independent and non-identically distributed data conditions while maintaining data privacy. The Grad-CAM outputs also enhanced model transparency and interpretability. Overall, the proposed framework provides an efficient, scalable, and trustworthy approach for automated crop disease diagnosis and may contribute to the development of intelligent, privacy-aware agricultural systems for precision farming applications.

Keywords —Federated Learning, Crop Disease Detection, MobileNetV2, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI), Grad-CAM, Privacy Preservation, Deep Learning, Smart Agriculture

I. INTRODUCTION

Agriculture plays a vital role in ensuring food security and supporting the economy of many countries. Crop diseases significantly affect agricultural productivity, resulting in substantial yield losses and economic damage to farmers. Early and accurate disease identification is essential for effective crop management and sustainable agricultural development. Traditionally, crop disease diagnosis relies on manual inspection by agricultural experts, which is often time-consuming, labor-intensive, and inaccessible in remote farming regions.

Recent advancements in Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML), and Deep Learning (DL) have enabled automated crop disease detection systems based on image analysis. Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs) have demonstrated remarkable performance in classifying plant diseases from leaf images. However, most existing deep learning approaches require centralized data collection, where images from different farms and agricultural institutions are stored on a central server. Such approaches raise concerns related to data privacy, security, ownership, and communication overhead.

Federated Learning (FL) has emerged as a promising distributed learning paradigm that enables multiple participants to collaboratively train a machine learning model without sharing raw data. Instead, local model updates are exchanged and aggregated to generate a global model. This approach preserves data privacy while benefiting from collaborative learning across geographically distributed agricultural environments. Furthermore, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques are increasingly being adopted to improve the transparency and interpretability of deep learning models. Among these techniques, Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) provides visual explanations by highlighting the regions responsible for model predictions.

To address the challenges of privacy preservation, computational efficiency, and model interpretability, this research proposes a Federated Learning-based Crop Disease Detection Framework using MobileNetV2 and Grad-CAM. The proposed system combines lightweight deep learning, privacy-preserving collaborative learning, and explainable AI to provide an efficient and practical solution for intelligent crop disease diagnosis in smart agriculture applications.

II. RELATED WORK

Recent advances in artificial intelligence and distributed machine learning have significantly improved crop disease detection systems. Existing studies in this domain can be broadly categorized into three major themes: Federated Learning-based crop disease detection, lightweight and efficient deep learning architectures, and privacy-preserving and explainable smart agriculture systems.

A. Federated Learning for Crop Disease Detection

Federated Learning (FL) has emerged as a promising approach for privacy-preserving agricultural applications by enabling collaborative model training without sharing raw data. Several studies have explored the application of FL for crop disease diagnosis. AGRIFOLD introduced an optimized federated framework for leaf disease detection and demonstrated the effectiveness of distributed learning in agricultural environments [1]. Adaptive knowledge transfer techniques were later incorporated to improve learning performance under heterogeneous client data distributions [2]. Resource-efficient FL approaches for rice leaf disease classification focused on reducing communication costs while maintaining predictive performance [3]. Other studies investigated decentralized aggregation strategies [5], heterogeneous multi-site disease diagnosis [6], and federated crop disease prediction frameworks [10]. Hierarchical CNN-based federated models [14], UAV-assisted disease diagnosis systems [21], and the LeafDNet framework [27] further demonstrated the growing applicability of FL in agricultural disease management. Recent studies have also explored few-shot learning and multimodal agricultural data integration within federated environments to improve model generalization and scalability [24], [29].

B. Lightweight Deep Learning Models for Agricultural Disease Classification

Deep learning methods have seen significant success in identifying plant diseases, yet many models are still too computationally intensive for practical use in agricultural environments. To tackle this issue, researchers have suggested more lightweight and efficient designs. Federated transfer learning techniques help to lower computational demands while preserving classification accuracy [4]. Lightweight federated deep learning models for detecting rice diseases have shown that compact neural networks can be effectively deployed in environments with limited resources [9]. Compact deep learning models with federated enhancements highlight the efficiency and scalability of edge devices [23]. Moreover, methods based on semantic segmentation for disease classification [8], dual-head convolutional neural networks for monitoring plant health [19], and frameworks for estimating disease severity [28] improve feature extraction and disease localization. Additionally, deep vision techniques utilizing object detection methods like YOLO have been used to pinpoint disease-affected areas with high accuracy [20].

C. Privacy, Security, and Explainable AI in Smart Agriculture

Data privacy and model interpretability remain critical challenges in intelligent agricultural systems. Several studies have focused on secure and scalable Federated Learning frameworks for smart farming applications. Blockchain-assisted FL architectures improved trust and security in collaborative agricultural environments [11], while scalable privacy-preserving approaches enhanced the reliability of distributed learning systems [12]. Federated transfer learning has also been utilized for drought prediction and agricultural forecasting applications [13]. Comprehensive surveys highlighted the importance of privacy-preserving learning in agriculture and discussed emerging challenges associated with data governance and security [15]–[17], [22], [25], [26], [30]. Furthermore, Explainable Artificial Intelligence (XAI) techniques have gained increasing attention for improving transparency in disease diagnosis systems. Deep ensemble learning integrated with explainable methods enabled visual interpretation of disease predictions and improved user confidence in automated diagnosis systems [18].

D. Research Gap and Distinction of the Proposed Work

While prior research has shown Federated Learning to be effective in detecting crop diseases, there are still several challenges to address. Many methods emphasize classification accuracy but tend to neglect model interpretability and the feasibility of real-time deployment. Although lightweight deep learning models have been explored on their own, their combination with privacy-preserving federated systems is still rare. Similarly, methods for explainable disease diagnosis are frequently developed separately from Federated Learning frameworks. Additionally, numerous studies have tested models using idealized data distributions instead of realistic non-IID agricultural settings. To overcome these challenges, this study proposes a unified framework that combines Federated Learning, MobileNetV2, Federated Averaging (FedAvg), and Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM). Unlike earlier methods, this system offers privacy protection, efficient computation, explainable disease diagnosis, and real-time deployment through a Streamlit-based application. Moreover, the framework assesses model performance with heterogeneous non-IID client data distributions, enhancing its applicability to real-world smart agriculture scenarios.

E. Research Gap Analysis

Existing Studies	Research Gap
FL-based disease detection systems focus mainly on privacy preservation.	Limited integration of explainable AI techniques.
XAI-based disease detection systems improve interpretability.	Most use centralized learning and ignore data privacy.
Lightweight CNN models support edge deployment.	Few studies combine lightweight CNNs with FL and XAI simultaneously.
Advanced FL methods improve collaboration among clients.	Real-time deployment for practical agricultural usage remains limited.
Segmentation and severity estimation models improve localization.	Increased computational complexity limits edge deployment.
Blockchain and secure FL frameworks improve security.	High implementation complexity and communication overhead.

Table 1. Research gap analysis

F. Research Motivation

Research suggests that the aspects of privacy-preserving crop disease detection, model interpretability, and edge deployment are typically tackled separately. There is a scarcity of research that combines these three elements into one cohesive framework. Consequently, this research introduces a crop disease detection system based on Federated Learning, employing MobileNetV2, FedAvg, and Grad-CAM. This system aims to deliver precise, lightweight, explainable, and privacy-preserving disease diagnosis, making it ideal for smart agriculture applications.

G. Novelty of Proposed Work

The proposed research introduces a unified framework that combines Federated Learning, MobileNetV2, Federated Averaging (FedAvg), and Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) for privacy-preserving and explainable crop disease detection. While previous studies have individually explored Federated Learning, lightweight deep learning architectures, or Explainable Artificial Intelligence techniques, very few have integrated all these components into a single agricultural disease diagnosis system.

The primary novelty of this work lies in the implementation of a lightweight MobileNetV2 model within a Federated Learning environment, enabling collaborative model training without sharing raw agricultural data. This approach preserves data privacy while maintaining high classification accuracy. Unlike conventional centralized learning systems, the proposed framework allows multiple distributed clients to participate in model training through the FedAvg aggregation mechanism, making it suitable for real-world smart farming environments.

Another significant contribution is the integration of Grad-CAM for visual interpretation of disease predictions. The explainability component highlights disease-affected regions of crop leaves, allowing farmers and agricultural experts to understand the reasoning behind model decisions. This improves transparency, reliability, and user trust, which are often lacking in traditional deep learning-based disease detection systems.

Furthermore, the proposed framework is evaluated under Non-IID data distributions to simulate realistic agricultural scenarios where disease occurrences and crop varieties differ across farms. The final global model is deployed through a Streamlit-based web application, enabling real-time crop disease diagnosis and practical field-level usability.

The key novel contributions of this research are summarized as follows:

1. Development of a privacy-preserving crop disease detection framework using Federated Learning.
2. Integration of MobileNetV2 as a lightweight convolutional neural network suitable for edge and mobile deployment.
3. Simulation of heterogeneous Non-IID agricultural environments using multiple federated clients.
4. Implementation of the Federated Averaging (FedAvg) algorithm for collaborative global model training.
5. Integration of Grad-CAM to improve explainability and interpretability of disease predictions.
6. Deployment of the proposed framework through a Streamlit-based real-time disease diagnosis application.
7. Achievement of high classification performance while simultaneously ensuring privacy preservation, computational efficiency, and model transparency.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *System Architecture*

The proposed framework integrates Federated Learning (FL), MobileNetV2, Federated Averaging (FedAvg), and Gradient-weighted Class Activation Mapping (Grad-CAM) to develop a privacy-preserving and explainable crop disease detection system. Unlike traditional centralized deep learning approaches that require the collection of all agricultural data on a central server, the proposed system enables collaborative model training while keeping crop images stored locally on participating clients. This approach preserves data privacy, reduces communication risks, and supports scalable deployment across distributed agricultural environments.

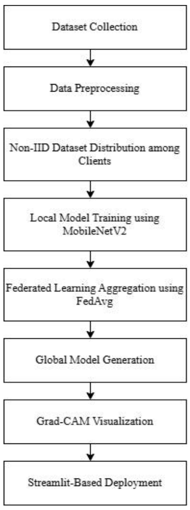

Fig. 1 Proposed System Architecture

As shown in Fig. 1, the proposed framework consists of five major stages: dataset collection and preprocessing, local model training using MobileNetV2, federated model aggregation using FedAvg, explainable disease prediction through Grad-CAM visualization, and real-time deployment using a Streamlit-based web application. Initially, crop leaf images are collected and preprocessed before being distributed among multiple federated clients. Each client independently trains a local MobileNetV2 model using its own dataset. After local training, only model parameters are transmitted to a central aggregation server. The FedAvg algorithm combines local model updates to generate a global model that is redistributed to all clients for subsequent communication rounds. After convergence, the final global model is deployed for real-time crop disease diagnosis. Grad-CAM is employed to visualize disease-affected regions and improve model transparency.

The global model is generated using the Federated Averaging algorithm:

$$W_{global} = \sum_{k=0}^{N} \frac{nk}{n} W_k$$

where:
W_{global} = Global model weights
W_k = Local model weights of client k
n_k = Number of samples at client k
n = Total number of samples across all clients

For model explainability, Grad-CAM generates class-specific activation maps according to:

$$L^{C}_{Grad\text{-}CAM} = ReLU\left(\sum_k \alpha^{C}_{k} A^{k}\right)$$

where A^k represents feature maps extracted from the final convolutional layer and α^c_k denotes the importance weight corresponding to class c. The resulting heatmap highlights image regions that contribute most strongly to disease predictions.

B. *Dataset and Pre-processing*

The experiments were conducted using the Crop Disease Detection Dataset obtained from Kaggle. The dataset is derived from the PlantVillage repository and contains images of healthy and diseased crop leaves representing multiple crop species and disease categories. The dataset includes approximately 7,000 RGB images belonging to 12 disease and healthy classes. The dataset is publicly available and has been widely utilized for agricultural disease classification research.

To ensure compatibility with the MobileNetV2 architecture, all images were resized to 224 × 224 pixels and converted into RGB format. Pixel intensity values were normalized to the range of 0 to 1 to improve numerical stability and accelerate model convergence during training.

To enhance model generalization capability and reduce overfitting, various data augmentation techniques were applied, including random rotation, horizontal flipping, vertical flipping, zooming, width shifting, height shifting, and brightness adjustment. These augmentation operations generated diverse image variations and enabled the model to learn disease characteristics under different environmental conditions, including varying lighting conditions, leaf orientations, and image capture perspectives.

The dataset was divided into training, validation, and testing subsets using a 70:10:20 ratio. To simulate realistic agricultural environments, the training dataset was distributed among three federated clients with Non-IID data distributions. Each client received a unique subset of crop disease images representing different agricultural regions and disease occurrence patterns.

Parameter	Value

Dataset Name	Crop Disease Detection Dataset
Source	Kaggle
Original Dataset	PlantVillage
Total Images	Approximately 7,000+
Number of Classes	12
Image Format	RGB

Table 1. Dataset Configuration

C. Experimental Setup

The proposed framework was implemented using Python 3 with TensorFlow and Keras deep learning libraries. Model training and evaluation were conducted in the Google Colab environment using NVIDIA Tesla T4 GPU acceleration to improve computational efficiency and reduce training time. The final disease detection system was deployed through a Streamlit-based web application to enable real-time crop disease diagnosis.

MobileNetV2 was selected as the classification backbone due to its lightweight architecture, reduced computational complexity, and suitability for edge-device deployment. The model was trained using the Adam optimization algorithm with a learning rate of 0.001. Categorical Cross-Entropy was employed as the loss function for multi-class disease classification. Training was performed using a batch size of 32 for 10 epochs.

Parameter	**Specification**
Programming Language	Python 3
Deep Learning Framework	Keras
Development Environment	Google Colab
Operating System	Windows 11
GPU Support	NVIDIA Tesla T4
Deployment Framework	Streamlit
Visualization Tool	Grad-CAM

Table 2. Hardware and Software Configuration

The performance of a deep learning model is highly influenced by the selection of appropriate hyperparameters. Hyperparameters determine the learning behavior of the network during training and directly affect convergence speed, classification accuracy, and generalization capability. In this study, MobileNetV2 was employed as the base classification model due to its lightweight architecture and computational efficiency, making it suitable for deployment in resource-constrained agricultural environments.

The model was trained using the Adam optimization algorithm, which combines the advantages of adaptive learning rate methods and momentum-based optimization. A learning rate of 0.001 was selected to ensure stable convergence while avoiding large fluctuations in model weights. Categorical Cross-Entropy was used as the loss function because the crop disease detection task involves multi-class classification. The Rectified Linear Unit (ReLU) activation function was utilized in hidden layers to improve non-linearity and accelerate training, while the Softmax activation function was employed in the output layer to generate probability scores for each disease category.

The selected hyperparameters were determined through experimental evaluation and commonly accepted deep learning practices. Table III summarizes the hyperparameter configuration used for training the proposed MobileNetV2-based crop disease detection model.

Parameter	**Value**
Model	MobileNetV2
Input Size	224 × 224 × 3
Optimizer	Adam
Learning Rate	0.001
Loss Function	Categorical Cross-Entropy
Batch Size	32
Epochs	10
Activation Function	ReLU
Output Layer	Softmax

Table 3. Model Hyperparameters

Within the Federated Learning framework, three participating clients independently trained MobileNetV2 models using their local datasets. Raw crop images remained on client devices throughout the training process, ensuring privacy preservation. After every local training cycle, only model parameters were transmitted to the central server. The FedAvg algorithm aggregated client updates to generate a global model, which was redistributed for the next communication round. A total of 10 communication rounds were performed, with each client executing 5 local training epochs before aggregation.

The performance of the proposed framework was evaluated using Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score metrics. In addition, confusion matrix analysis was conducted to assess class-wise prediction performance. Grad-CAM visualizations were generated for selected disease predictions to evaluate model interpretability and verify whether the network focused on disease-affected leaf regions. The experiments were repeated multiple times and the average performance values were reported to ensure reproducibility and consistency of results.

Parameter	Value
Number of Clients	3
Aggregation Method	FedAvg
Communication Rounds	10
Local Epochs	5
Data Distribution	Non-IID
Global Model	MobileNetV2

Table 4. Federated Learning Configurations

This methodology ensures privacy-preserving, lightweight, explainable, and scalable crop disease detection suitable for modern smart agriculture applications.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The proposed FL-MobileNetV2 framework was evaluated using Accuracy, Precision, Recall, and F1-Score metrics. The experiments were conducted on the Crop Disease Detection Dataset under a Federated Learning environment consisting of three clients with Non-IID data distributions. The final global model was obtained using the FedAvg aggregation algorithm and evaluated on an unseen test dataset.

A. Quantitative Performance Evaluation

Table 5 presents the overall classification performance achieved by the proposed framework.

Metric	Value(%)
Accuracy	95.93
Precision	96.13
Recall	95.93
F1 Score	95.94

Table 5. Performance Evaluation Metrics

The proposed framework achieved an overall classification accuracy of 95.93%, indicating its effectiveness in identifying crop diseases from leaf images. The precision value of 96.13% demonstrates that the model produces very few false positive predictions, while the recall value of 95.93% confirms its ability to successfully identify actual disease cases. The F1-score of 95.94% indicates a balanced trade-off between precision and recall, highlighting the robustness of the proposed system.

The training performance of the proposed model is illustrated in Fig. 2 and Fig. 3. As shown in Fig. 2, training accuracy increased steadily from approximately 84.8% in the first epoch to 96.2% in the final epoch. Similarly, validation accuracy remained consistently high throughout the training process, reaching a peak value of approximately 97.8% at Epoch 4 and maintaining an average accuracy above 96%. The small gap between training and validation accuracy indicates good generalization capability and minimal overfitting.

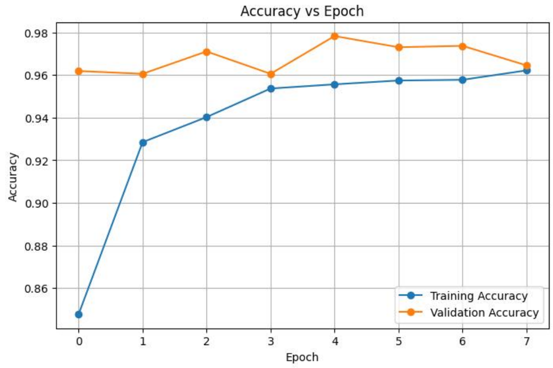

Fig. 2 Accuracy vs epoch

The loss curves shown in Fig. 3 further confirm successful model convergence. Training loss decreased significantly from approximately 0.46 during the initial epoch to nearly 0.10 in the final epoch. Validation loss remained relatively stable between 0.08 and 0.13 throughout training, indicating that the model effectively learned disease-related features without experiencing significant instability or performance degradation.

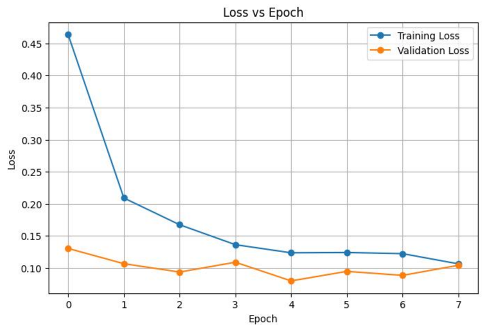

Fig.3 Training and Validation Loss Across Training Epochs

The observed accuracy and loss trends demonstrate that MobileNetV2 successfully extracted discriminative disease features from crop leaf images. Furthermore, the stable validation performance suggests that the adopted preprocessing, augmentation, and Federated Learning strategy contributed to improved model robustness under heterogeneous data distributions.

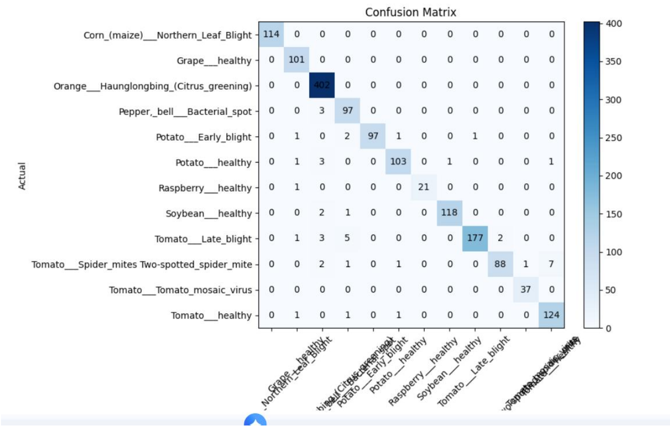

Fig. 4 Confusion Matrix of Crop Disease Classification Results

The confusion matrix in Fig. 4 demonstrates the strong classification performance of the proposed FL-MobileNetV2 model across twelve crop disease classes. Most samples are correctly classified, as indicated by the high concentration of values along the diagonal. Classes such as Corn Northern Leaf Blight, Grape Healthy, Orange Huanglongbing, Soybean Healthy, Tomato Healthy, and Tomato Late Blight achieved very high prediction accuracy. A few misclassifications occurred between visually similar disease categories due to similarities in leaf symptoms and lesion patterns. Overall, the results confirm the effectiveness, robustness, and generalization capability of the Federated Learning-based MobileNetV2 model under Non-IID data distributions.

B. Federated Learning Performance

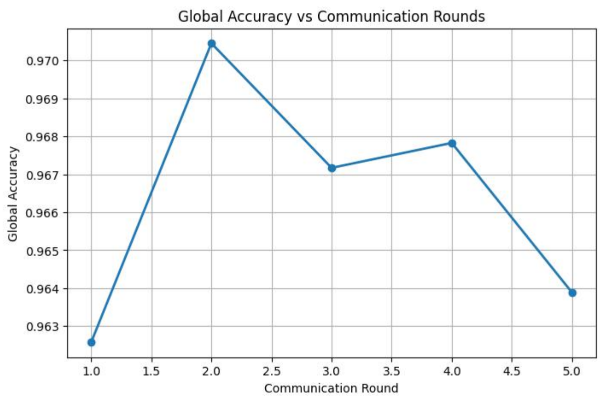

Fig 4. Global Model Accuracy Across Federated Learning Communication Rounds

The performance of the global model was evaluated across multiple federated communication rounds. As shown in Fig. 5, the global model achieved an accuracy of approximately 98.1% during the first communication round. Minor fluctuations were observed in subsequent rounds due to the Non-IID distribution of client data. The accuracy decreased to around 96.8%–97.0% during intermediate rounds and later improved to approximately 97.4% after aggregation. The results indicate that the FedAvg algorithm effectively combines knowledge learned from multiple clients and maintains stable model performance despite heterogeneous local datasets. The overall trend demonstrates successful convergence of the federated learning process while preserving data privacy.

C. Explainability Analysis Using Grad-CAM

To improve transparency and interpretability, Grad-CAM visualization was integrated into the proposed framework.

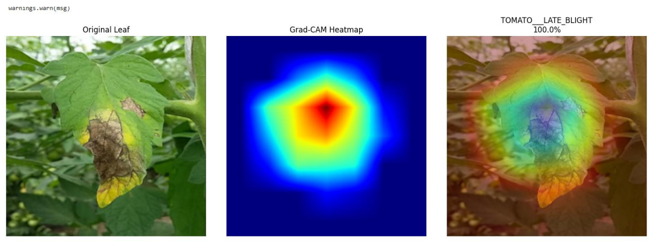

Fig 4. Grad-CAM Visualization Highlighting Disease-Affected Regions

The generated heatmaps indicate that the model focuses primarily on disease-relevant regions such as lesions, discoloration, necrotic tissues, and infected leaf areas. The visual explanations confirm that predictions are based on meaningful disease characteristics rather than background artifacts.

The explainability component improves user trust and allows agricultural experts to validate the reasoning behind model predictions.

D. Discussion

D.1 Why Federated Learning Improves Privacy

Traditional crop disease detection systems rely on centralized training, where all agricultural images are collected and stored on a central server. Such an approach may expose sensitive farming information and increase the risk of data leakage. Federated Learning addresses this challenge by enabling model training directly on local client devices while keeping raw crop images at their source. Only model parameters are shared with the aggregation server through the FedAvg algorithm. As a result, the proposed framework preserves data privacy while still benefiting from collaborative learning across multiple clients. This characteristic makes Federated Learning highly suitable for smart agriculture environments where data ownership and confidentiality are important concerns.

D.2 Why MobileNetV2 Was Selected

MobileNetV2 was selected as the disease classification model because of its lightweight architecture and computational efficiency. The model employs depthwise separable convolutions and inverted residual blocks, significantly reducing the number of trainable parameters and computational operations compared to conventional convolutional neural networks. Despite its compact design, MobileNetV2 maintains high classification accuracy and fast inference speed. These properties make it suitable for deployment on mobile devices, edge computing platforms, and resource-constrained agricultural systems. The experimental results demonstrate that MobileNetV2 effectively learns disease-specific features while maintaining an overall classification accuracy of 95.93%.

D.3 Why Grad-CAM Improves User Trust

Although deep learning models achieve high predictive performance, they are often criticized for operating as black-box systems. To improve transparency and interpretability, Grad-CAM was integrated into the proposed framework. Grad-CAM generates visual heatmaps that highlight the image regions contributing most significantly to a disease prediction. The generated visualizations confirmed that the model focused on disease-affected regions such as lesions, discoloration, and infected tissues rather than irrelevant background information. This explainability mechanism enables farmers and agricultural experts to verify model decisions and increases confidence in the diagnosis process. Therefore, Grad-CAM enhances the practical usability and trustworthiness of the proposed system.

D.4 Performance Under Non-IID Data Distribution

In real-world Federated Learning environments, data collected by different clients are rarely identical. Variations in crop species, disease prevalence, environmental conditions, and image acquisition methods lead to Non-IID data distributions. To simulate this realistic scenario, the dataset was distributed among three federated clients with different class distributions. Despite this heterogeneity, the FedAvg aggregation algorithm successfully combined local model updates and produced a robust global model. The achieved accuracy of 95.93% demonstrates that the proposed framework can effectively learn generalized disease representations even when client data distributions differ significantly. This capability is essential for practical deployment in geographically distributed agricultural systems.

D.5 Limitations of the Proposed System

Although the proposed framework achieved promising results, several limitations remain. The current implementation was evaluated using only three federated clients and a limited number of communication rounds. The dataset was derived from publicly available crop disease images and may not fully represent complex real-world agricultural environments. Furthermore, communication overhead, client resource constraints, and network latency were not extensively analyzed. Future work may focus on large-scale federated deployments involving more clients, advanced aggregation strategies, differential privacy techniques, and real-time edge device implementation. Additional evaluation on field-acquired crop images could further improve the robustness and generalization capability of the proposed system.

V. CONCLUSION AND FUTURE WORK

This research presented a privacy-preserving and explainable crop disease detection framework that integrates Federated Learning, MobileNetV2, FedAvg aggregation, and Grad-CAM visualization. The proposed system enables collaborative model training across multiple clients without sharing raw agricultural data, thereby preserving data privacy while maintaining high classification performance. Experimental results demonstrated that the framework achieved an overall accuracy of 95.93%, precision of 96.13%, recall of 95.93%, and F1-score of 95.94%, confirming its effectiveness for crop disease diagnosis under Non-IID federated environments. Furthermore, Grad-CAM visualizations improved model interpretability by highlighting disease-affected regions responsible for predictions, enhancing user trust and transparency.

Future work will focus on extending the framework to larger-scale federated networks involving a greater number of clients and diverse agricultural datasets. Additional research may incorporate advanced aggregation techniques, differential privacy mechanisms, and secure federated optimization methods to further strengthen privacy and robustness. Moreover, deployment on edge devices and real-world agricultural environments will be explored to enable real-time disease monitoring and decision support for smart farming applications.

VI. DECLARATIONS

A. Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

B. Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

C. Data Availability

The dataset used in this study is publicly available through the Kaggle Crop Disease Detection Dataset. Additional materials and implementation details are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request.

D. Ethics Statement

This study did not involve human participants, animals, or any identifiable personal data. Therefore, ethical approval was not required.

E. Author Contributions

Conceptualization, Neha Wagh; Methodology, Neha Wagh; Software, Neha Wagh; Validation, Neha Wagh; Investigation, Neha Wagh; Writing — original draft, Neha Wagh; Writing — review and editing, Neha Wagh; Supervision, Pournima Gawade. All authors have read and agreed to the published version of the manuscript.

VII. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The authors sincerely thank the Department of Computer Science & Engineering, Deogiri Institute of Engineering & Management Studies, Chh. Sambhajinagar, India, for providing the infrastructure, resources, and academic support required for this research. The authors are especially grateful to Prof. Pournima Gawade for her valuable guidance, constructive suggestions, and continuous encouragement throughout the study. The authors also acknowledge the contributors of the publicly available Crop Disease Detection Dataset and the open-source software community whose resources supported the successful completion of this work.

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