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AI APPLICATIONS IN AGRICULTURE, HEALTH, AND PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY

[1]Dr. M. Santhoshkumar, [2]Mr. S. Srinivasan, [3]Dr. S. Vijayalakshmi

1,2,3 Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is increasingly used to improve productivity, access, and efficiency across agriculture, healthcare, and public service delivery. This paper reviews major AI applications in these sectors, including precision farming, disease diagnosis, predictive health analytics, citizen-service chatbots, and data-driven governance. It also examines implementation barriers such as data quality, digital infrastructure, privacy, algorithmic bias, and workforce readiness. The paper concludes that AI can deliver substantial public value when deployed through responsible governance, interoperable data systems, and human-centred design.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Machine Learning; Precision Agriculture; Digital Health; e-Governance; Public Service Delivery

1. Introduction

AI refers to computational systems that perform tasks associated with human intelligence, such as learning from data, recognizing patterns, making predictions, and supporting decisions. Machine learning, computer vision, natural language processing, and predictive analytics are the most common AI techniques used in public-facing sectors.

Governments and service providers are adopting AI to address persistent challenges: limited agricultural productivity, unequal access to healthcare, rising service demand, and inefficient

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:	RESEARCH ARTICLE
Dr. M. Santhoshkumar Assistant Professor, Department of Economics, Thiruvalluvar University, Vellore – 632115, Tamil Nadu, India. Email: santhoshmurugan430@gmail.com	

administrative processes. AI-enabled systems can convert large volumes of sensor, clinical, administrative, and citizen-interaction data into timely insights.

Objectives:

1. Review leading AI applications in agriculture, health, and public service delivery.
2. Identify cross-sector benefits and implementation challenges.
3. Propose principles for responsible and scalable AI adoption.

2. AI in Agriculture

AI supports agriculture through precision farming, crop monitoring, pest and disease detection, yield prediction, irrigation optimization, and autonomous machinery. These applications use data from satellites, drones, soil sensors, weather stations, and historical farm records.

2.1 Precision agriculture

Precision agriculture uses AI to apply water, fertilizer, and pesticides only where needed. Machine-learning models can analyze field variability and recommend site-specific interventions, reducing input waste while improving crop yields.

2.2 Crop and livestock monitoring

Computer-vision systems analyze drone or satellite imagery to identify crop stress, weeds, pest infestations, and nutrient deficiencies. In livestock farming, AI can monitor animal health, feeding patterns, and early signs of disease.

2.3 Yield and climate prediction

Predictive models combine weather data, soil conditions, crop history, and remote-sensing imagery to estimate yields and advise farmers on planting and harvesting. Such systems can improve resilience to climate variability by supporting earlier and better-informed decisions.

2.4 Agricultural extension

Conversational AI tools can provide farmers with localized advice on crop selection, pest control, market prices, and government schemes. However, their usefulness depends on local-language support, reliable connectivity, and accurate domain knowledge.

3. AI in Health

AI applications in healthcare range from diagnostic support to hospital operations and public-health surveillance. The central value proposition is faster, more consistent analysis of complex medical data, while preserving clinician judgement and patient rights.

3.1 Diagnosis and clinical decision support

Machine-learning models can assist in detecting conditions from medical images, laboratory results, and electronic health records. Examples include support for radiology, pathology, dermatology, and early identification of deterioration in hospitalized patients.

3.2 Predictive and preventive care

AI can identify patients at high risk of chronic disease, readmission, or complications by analyzing longitudinal health records. This enables preventive interventions, targeted screening, and more efficient allocation of healthcare resources.

3.3 Public-health surveillance

AI can monitor disease outbreaks, predict transmission patterns, and support resource planning during epidemics. These systems are most effective when integrated with reliable, timely, and privacy-protected health data.

3.4 Health-service operations

Hospitals use AI for appointment scheduling, triage, staff allocation, inventory management, and claims processing. These applications reduce administrative burden and allow health workers to spend more time on patient care.

4. AI in Public Service Delivery

AI is transforming public administration by improving responsiveness, accessibility, and efficiency of citizen services. Common applications include chatbots, document automation, fraud detection, welfare-targeting, traffic management, and predictive maintenance of public infrastructure.

4.1 Citizen-facing services

AI chatbots and virtual assistants can answer routine questions, guide citizens through applications, and provide multilingual support. This can reduce waiting times and improve access for users who cannot easily visit government offices.

4.2 Administrative automation

Natural-language processing can extract information from forms, classify complaints, summarize documents, and route service requests to the correct department. Automation is most valuable for repetitive, rule-based tasks.

4.3 Fraud detection and welfare targeting

AI can detect anomalies in benefit claims, tax filings, procurement records, and public spending. When designed carefully, these systems can reduce leakage; when poorly designed, they may exclude eligible citizens or reinforce existing inequalities.

4.4 Urban and infrastructure management

Cities use AI for traffic prediction, waste-collection routing, energy optimization, and maintenance of roads, water systems, and public transport. These applications depend heavily on sensor networks and high-quality municipal data.

5. Cross-Sector Benefits

Sector	Major AI applications	Primary benefits
Agriculture	Precision farming, pest detection, yield forecasting, smart irrigation	Higher productivity, lower input costs, climate resilience
Health	Diagnostic support, risk prediction, surveillance, hospital operations	Earlier detection, better resource use, improved access
Public services	Chatbots, document automation, fraud analytics, urban management	Faster service, lower administrative cost, better targeting

6. Implementation Challenges

Despite its potential, AI adoption faces common barriers across all three sectors:

- **Data quality and availability:** AI systems require accurate, representative, and regularly updated data.
- **Digital infrastructure:** Rural agriculture, primary healthcare, and local government often lack reliable connectivity, devices, and technical capacity.
- **Privacy and security:** Agricultural, health, and citizen data are sensitive and require strong safeguards.
- **Bias and fairness:** Models trained on incomplete or unrepresentative data may disadvantage marginalized groups.
- **Explainability and accountability:** Public decisions should be understandable, reviewable, and subject to human oversight.
- **Skills and change management:** Farmers, clinicians, officials, and citizens need training and trust-building support.

7. Responsible Adoption Framework

A responsible AI strategy should include:

1. **Human-centred design:** Involve farmers, patients, frontline workers, and citizens from the design stage.
2. **Data governance:** Establish clear rules for consent, access, retention, security, and interoperability.
3. **Bias auditing:** Test systems across regions, languages, genders, income groups, and service-user profiles.

4. **Human oversight:** Keep humans responsible for high-stakes decisions in health, welfare, and law enforcement.
5. **Capacity building:** Train users and provide local technical support.
6. **Impact evaluation:** Measure accuracy, equity, cost savings, service quality, and user satisfaction.
7. **Scalable procurement:** Prefer modular, open, and interoperable systems over isolated pilots.

8. Conclusion

AI has significant potential to improve agricultural productivity, strengthen healthcare delivery, and make public services more responsive. Its benefits are not automatic: successful deployment requires reliable data, inclusive design, adequate infrastructure, and strong governance. Future research should focus on low-cost AI solutions, local-language systems, explainable models, and rigorous evaluation of real-world public impact.

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