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From Genomes to Fields: PlantGPT as an AI Conduit for Democratizing Genomic Intelligence in Indian Agriculture

Achyuta Basak[1] and Sagardeep Sinha[2*]

[1]Dept. of Genetics and Plant Breeding, Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Pundibari, Cooch Behar, West Bengal (736 165), India
[2]Dept. of Soil Science and Agricultural Chemistry, Uttar Banga Krishi Viswavidyalaya, Pundibari, Cooch Behar, West Bengal (736 165), India

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Corresponding Author

Sagardeep Sinha

: sgrdpsnh@gmail.com

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Abstract

PlantGPT is a monumental advancement in AI as it pertains to agriculture. Created by Chinese researchers, it is the first LLM designed for plant functional genomics in the world. Developed as open-source with *Arabidopsis thaliana* information, it demystifies complex gene-trait-phenotype relationships by allowing straightforward natural language queries. This article examines the architecture behind PlantGPT and its implications for the future of plant breeding. Most importantly, we talk about scaling and integrating it into India's digital ecosystems, such as Farmer.Chat for field advisories and KissanGPT for vernacular knowledge delivery, connecting the dots between lab knowledge and on-farm action. A thoughtful blend of PlantGPT with India's native crops and current AI has tremendous potential. The Indian roadmap directly emphasizes the need to localize this open-source tech, for strong validation and for promoting ethical AI to exploit synthetic biology for food security.

Keywords: AI, LLM, Plant breeding, PlantGPT

Introduction

The world is facing a moment of truth in its agriculture as climate uncertainties, pests and food security needs continue to widen day by day. Since the agricultural industry provides around 18% of the Indian GDP and feeds more than 60% of the population (Stanly, 2023), the need of innovation has never been so intense. Here comes artificial intelligence that is going to revolutionize our laboratories and fields (Saini *et al*., 2024). One of the most innovative developments is a PlantGPT, the first large language model designed solely to solve plant functional genomics problems, the creation of which was undertaken by Chinese scientists of the Chinese Academy of Sciences, South China Agricultural University and Tsinghua University (Zhang *et al*., 2025). The expert system reports accurate context-sensitive answers based on *Arabidopsis* and holds the promise of democratizing genomic knowledge and speeding crop improvement research.

Although traditional plant databases are very high in data, they have a major drawback; querying these databases needs exact nomenclature of traits or genes and they are not interactive to resolve complicated biological processes (Kaiwei and Wenxing, 2025). At the same time, invisible challenges are faced by farmers like shortages of nutrients in the soil, new pathogens ensuing and uncertain whether without timely scientific information back up. PlantGPT will exist at this corner, built as an open-source, constantly current AI companion that converts the flavour of genomes into actionable knowledge (Gokmen, 2025). It is a defining moment, both for Indian researchers developing climate-resistant crops and for farmers who make day-to-day agricultural decisions.

Inside PlantGPT: Architectural Breakthroughs and Capabilities

1. Foundational Framework and Knowledge Integration

The architecture of PlantGPT is a giant step towards domain AI. With over 30 years of peer-reviewed literature, genomic data and phenotypic data, derived through an extensive base of knowledge of *Arabidopsis thaliana*, the botanical model

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organism, the system models decades of peer-reviewed data within a centralized knowledge system (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). A strategic decision, *Arabidopsis* is the model plant in grasping how molecular processes are similar across the crops, flowering time transition, or the pathways of response to stressful conditions.

The model is implemented on a powerful biological knowledge generalisation framework that can interpret complicated connections of genes, protein, metabolic pathways and phenotypic indicator (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). In contrast to generic language models, PlantGPT comes with specific modules to analyzing multi-omics data- transcriptomics, proteomics and metabolomics- and can produce hypotheses on gene regulations and functions that would take months of manual labor and research (Kaiwei and Wenxing, 2025). This ability is effectively faster in the initial investigation stage given that Indian scientists could not have much resource available.

2. Technical Specifications and Access

Figure 1 illustrates the architecture of PlantGPT, which combines LLM (large language model) and RAG (retrieval-augmented generation) to retrieve domain-contained knowledge. The system first retrieves relevant contextual information and then synthesises it into coherent outputs for enhanced knowledge generation (Zhang *et al.*, 2025).

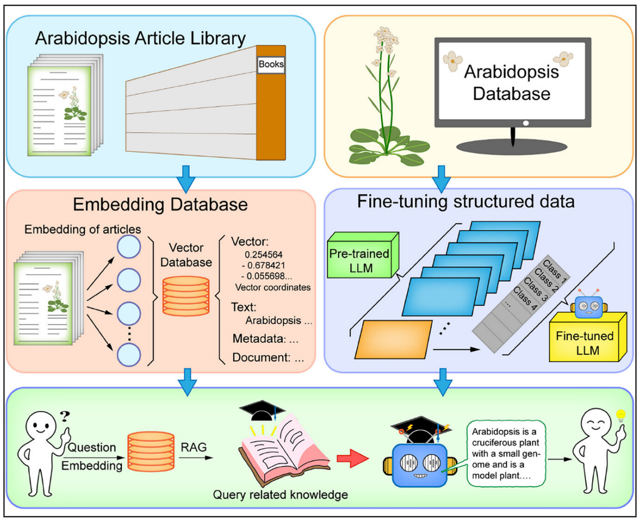

Figure 1: Architecture of PlantGPT integrating LLM and RAG for knowledge synthesis (Zhang *et al.*, 2025)

• *Open-Source Design*: Designed this way to support community-based improvement, so that the Indian research institutions can tailor modifications to local crops (rice, wheat and millets) on the base model.

• *Transfer Learning Architecture*: It allows retraining effectively based on datasets of a particular region, decreasing the need for computational resources.

• *Continuous Learning System*: This system is used to add newly emerging works of science into action in almost real-time so that core recommendations are up-to-date.

• *Availability*: It is available online both currently free of charge and in the future development plans involve integration with API to enable third party agricultural applications.

Empowering Research: PlantGPT as a Collaborative Intelligence for Scientists

1. Accelerating Functional Genomics Discovery

PlantGPT helps plant geneticists and breeders in India to overcome the immense complexity of post-genomic biology. Asked about stress-responsive genes, the system does not provide a list of candidates; instead, it compiles data on regulatory networks, orthologous genes in related crops, epistatic interactions and even target sites of gene editing (Kaiwei and Wenxing, 2025). Such a completely new way of looking at the world changes the way early-career researchers navigate the genomic world. A PhD student who is the researcher of salinity tolerance can view the comparative analysis of the *SOS pathway genes* between organisms in a single sitting as opposed to the fragmented information which they would have to collate over several weeks.

That the system can create testable biological hypotheses constitutes the most revolutionary aspect of the system. PlantGPT would serve as a partner in the modern sense as it would fill in knowledge gaps (Table 1) and propose feasible mechanisms to describe integrated data. The need to enhance phosphorus-use efficiency is an important question in Indian soils and the relevance of AI in finding the solutions may save up to 30-50% of time on potential preliminary research because it can specify candidate genes employing gene expression data in public databases and correlate with root architecture phenotypes and metabolic profiles (Gokmen, 2025).

Table 1: PlantGPT's core capabilities vs. Traditional research tools

Functionality	Traditional Databases	PlantGPT
Query flexibility	Requires exact gene/trait names.	Natural language questions accepted.
Multi-omics integration	Limited cross-dataset analysis.	Contextual integration across genomics, proteomics & metabolomics.
Hypothesis generation	Manual literature synthesis.	Automated identification of gene-phenotype relationships.
Accessibility	Specialised bioinformatics skills are needed.	Intuitive Q&A interface.
Update frequency	Periodic manual curation.	Continuous integration of new research.

2. Enhancing Decision-Making for Senior Scientists

For principal investigators and senior scientists, PlantGPT goes beyond just being a lab assistant; it becomes a key partner in strategic planning. In analyzing trends in world research, it not only determines new techniques (like CRISPR base editing or sequencing of single cells in plants), but also assesses the suitability of various techniques to particular objectives of crop improvement (Zhang *et al.*, 2025). Planning resource allocation toward a new initiative on disease resistance, the system can evaluate the maturity of different direction, RNAi-based approaches, effector-triggered immunity engineering and give leaders the ability to examine high-impact investments.

The open-source aspect is particularly promising to the Indian institutions. Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) may implement locally specific examples based on local crop varieties and research and develop special versions dedicated to rainfed agriculture problems or performing resistance to tropical pathogens. As the Indian government sets up Artificial Intelligence Centres of Excellence in the field of agriculture, funded by 990 crores (USD ~120 million) in the period of 2023-2028, the implementation of PlantGPT into such a framework opens up a strategic prospect.

Cultivating Field Intelligence: Farmer-Facing Applications

1. Democratising Genomic Knowledge for Agricultural Extension

PlantGPT isn't just smart science; it's a powerful tool designed to help farmers directly. It takes complex genetic insights and translates them into simple, practical advice through an easy-to-use app, even adapting to local languages.

Imagine the farmer observing strange leaf colouration. And instead of hazarding that it's a nutrient issue, maybe guessing wrong, they describe it to the app PlantGPT. The app goes on to compare the symptoms to local weather and soil information, as well as markers for disease, to recommend specific solutions. This fits perfectly with India's push for digital farming. Existing tools such as the government's chatbot "Kisan e-Mitra" (currently being used for scheme questions) could be supercharged with PlantGPT's know-how for providing farming tips. Likewise, a highly successful program in Telangana called "Saagu Baagu", that increased the income of chilli farmers by 21% based on advice over WhatsApp that AI made by crunching 60 years of crop data available, indicates the country is primed for this tech (Table 2). Finally, Ultimately, PlantGPT may be used as a "genomic intelligence layer" for other applications. It's the reason some plants are better able to resist local diseases and how soil microbes interact with plant genetics, guided by farmers on how to farm smarter, stronger and faster.

2. Bridging the Knowledge Gap with Voice-AI Synergy

The linguistic diversity of India is also a problem and a prospect. Although the current PlantGPT is working mostly with the English language, due to its architecture, it can be implemented into the multilingual models, such as KissanGPT, an Indian AI voice assistant that supports 9 regional languages (Hindi, Telugu, Tamil, Marathi and Bengali *etc.*) (Stanly, 2023). This collaboration may allow all-new accessibility: a Punjabi-speaking farmer speaks about stunted wheat crops, KissanGPT transcripts the voice, PlantGPT writes a science-supported answer with references to *Rht* gene variations causing changes in root morphology and the machine reproduces local advice in the local language.

Table 2: Complementary AI systems for Indian agriculture

AI System	Primary Strength	Integration Potential with PlantGPT
KissanGPT	Voice interface (9+ Indian languages); Low-literacy accessibility.	Voice-enabled delivery of PlantGPT's insights (*e.g.*, soil-microbiome genetics); Field queries trigger genomic explanations (*e.g.*, Rht gene variants in wheat).
Farmer.Chat	Multilingual AI advisory (WhatsApp/Telegram); Real-time weather/market data; Multimodal input (*e.g.*, photo-based diagnostics).	Operationalizes PlantGPT's genomic insights (*e.g.*, stress-tolerant genes) into vernacular advisories; Validates field-level crop issues via integrated RAG architecture.
AgNext	Computer vision for quality assessment.	Genetic markers for quality trait prediction.
KrishiTantra	Soil testing with ML.	Genomic insights for nutrient uptake efficiency.
Dhenu LLM	Agriculture-specific LLM (Hindi/English); Pest/irrigation guidance.	Augments pest-resistance advice with PlantGPT's gene-editing targets (*e.g.*, Bt gene homologs for cotton).
BharatAgri	GPT-based crop advisor; E-commerce integration for inputs.	Connects PlantGPT's variety recommendations (*e.g.*, drought-tolerant hybrids) with seed/input sales.
Jugalbandi	Access government schemes *via* WhatsApp (10 languages).	Channels PlantGPT-backed climate-resilient crops into subsidy/scheme outreach (*e.g.*, NLP-linked eligibility checks).
AgNext	Computer vision for crop quality assessment.	Correlates visual quality traits with PlantGPT's genomic markers (*e.g.*, shelf-life genes in tomatoes).

From *Arabidopsis* to Annapurna: Roadmap for Indian Agriculture

1. Strategic Integration with National Initiatives

The developers of PlantGPT have revealed that they will soon be extending support to synthetic biology and to other crops besides *Arabidopsis* (Gokmen, 2025). This roadmap presents numerous opportunities to align with India's agricultural priorities in a timely manner. The National Institute of Plant Genome Research (NIPGR) may initiate efforts at training customisable modules on indigenous crops beginning with pulse genomics (protein malnutrition) or millet optimisation (climate resilience). This customisation would render PlantGPT more than just a generic tool but a more India-specific advisor.

Integration should occur at three strategic levels:

i) Research Infrastructure: Integrating PlantGPT into the suggested AI-CoEs in agriculture in order to optimise crop breeding pipelines.

ii) Extension Ecosystem: Building light-weight versions that would be play on the current existing farmer advisory platforms such as Kisan Call Centres and mKisan.

iii) Education Framework: Developing curriculum modules for universities of agriculture that would describe genomic concepts in interactive AI conversation.

2. Addressing Implementation Challenges

The hypothesis is that although it is promising, it will not succeed because of the important pitfalls that have to be crossed:

• *Depth of Language*: The Indian agri-AI systems are currently operating on the operational tips, the incorporation of advanced concept of genomic level needs extreme vernacularisation.

• *Digital Equity*: Giving a means to non-smartphone users, may be *via* IVR-based applications or rural Interactive Kiosks.

• *Data Sovereignty*: Designing mechanisms of securely integrating the proprietary genomic databases in India in tailored models.

• *Validation Frameworks*: Developing a means of ground-truth AI recommendations and the local agroecologicalities.

The case of Telangana AI initiative provides useful lessons. The program also highlighted the necessity of evidence-based expansion through a phased approach having begun with a pilot testing it on 7,000 chilli farmers and then scaling up to 500,000 populations involving various crops. The same caution must be observed when implementing PlantGPT, with initial researcher-oriented applications and later transitioning to some farmer-oriented ones.

The Future Cultivated: Next-Generation Agricultural Intelligence

PlantGPT is not a one-off experiment; rather it's a real, practical agricultural AI model that will only realize its full potential with the support of additional, critical technologies. Its analysis is especially potent when supplied with near-time microclimate and embedded soil data, collected from direct sensor IOT networks deployed in the fields. This on-the-ground perspective is also complemented by drone-based phenotyping, which uses computer vision to identify crop stress from the air and provides almost genomic-level diagnosis when combined with PlantGPT AI. Importantly, building trust and facilitating collaboration is key and this is where blockchain technology can help by providing secure and open platforms where farmers can share their valuable field observations for safe collation into the shared knowledge base used to train PlantGPT.

Conclusion

At the crossroad of a new era in agricultural informatics we stand. As Prof. Zhang Wei, the lead developer of PlantGPT, envisions: "The system paves the way for developing specialised AI tools across vertical domains in agriculture". In case of India, where there are many challenges, but there is huge potential for innovation, this technology will not only provide convenience but will also provide democratized expertise, faster innovation and sustainable development productivity.

Finally, the takeaway is straightforward: This article urges agricultural research institutes in India to proactively consider joining the PlantGPT consortium, drive projects to explore and extrapolate on specific crops and promote the need for inclusive digital infrastructures through the government of India's Agriculture department. As this seed of genomic intelligence is nurtured, it can help cultivate not just better crops but also a more food-secure future, where every researcher's insight and every farmer's wisdom are valued and contribute to the collective progress.

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