International Journal for Multidisciplinary Research (IJFMR)
E-ISSN: 2582-2160 ● Website: www.ijfmr.com ● Email: editor@ijfmr.com

Swasthya Connect: Optimising Doctor Availability and Appointment Scheduling Using AI and Digital Tech

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Abstract

Swasthya Connect is a comprehensive digital healthcare management platform aimed at addressing operational inefficiencies in Indian public hospitals. By integrating Artificial Intelligence (AI), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and Blockchain technology, it provides an end-to-end solution to common healthcare challenges such as long wait times, poor resource visibility, and fragmented health records.

The AI module dynamically schedules appointments based on patient urgency and doctor availability, significantly reducing manual errors and optimizing medical staff utilization. RFID technology enables real-time tracking of medical personnel, beds, and essential equipment, streamlining emergency responsiveness and resource allocation. Blockchain ensures secure, tamper-proof electronic health records (EHRs), offering consent-based access control for patients and seamless interoperability between departments.

The system architecture is modular, leveraging a microservice design with React.js and Node.js for frontend and backend development, respectively. Data is managed through MongoDB and Firebase, while Ethereum smart contracts handle health data storage securely. A pilot simulation involving 500 patients and 15 doctors demonstrated substantial operational improvements, including a 60% reduction in patient wait times, an 85% drop in scheduling conflicts, and a 91% satisfaction rate among users.

Extensive feedback from doctors, administrative staff, and patients was incorporated to ensure ease of use and practical relevance. The multilingual, role-specific dashboards help overcome digital literacy barriers and provide stakeholders with personalized interfaces. Swasthya Connect also includes real-time notifications, automated workflows, and a scalable deployment model adaptable to varied hospital sizes and regional conditions.

Keywords: Healthcare Digitization, AI Scheduling, RFID Tracking, Blockchain, Public Hospitals, Electronic Health Records (EHR).

INTRODUCTION

India's public healthcare infrastructure plays a pivotal role in serving over a billion citizens, many of whom depend solely on government hospitals for medical attention. Yet, despite its critical importance, the system is plagued with inefficiencies. Overcrowded hospitals, long patient queues, under-resourced staff, and fragmented paper-based records continue to diminish care quality and operational effectiveness.

These shortcomings are not just infrastructural but systemic. Manual appointment scheduling often leads to double bookings, missed consultations, and prolonged waiting times. Doctors and nurses spend significant time on non-clinical administrative duties, reducing time spent on actual patient care. Patients face a lack of communication, uncertain wait durations, and poor access to their own health records, resulting in dissatisfaction and mistrust in public healthcare services.

Swasthya Connect was conceived as a direct response to these challenges. It is a digitally integrated healthcare management platform aimed at transforming the operations of government hospitals through the application of emerging technologies. The platform integrates Artificial Intelligence (AI) for intelligent appointment scheduling, Radio Frequency Identification (RFID) for real-time tracking of hospital resources, and Blockchain for tamper-proof, consent-based medical record storage.

AI within Swasthya Connect addresses the inefficiencies of appointment scheduling by analyzing historical patient flow, urgency levels, and doctor availability to automate and optimize slot allocation. This reduces human error and improves the predictability of consultations. RFID tags on staff ID cards, beds, and equipment feed data into live dashboards, helping administrators monitor availability, reduce search times, and improve emergency readiness. Blockchain ensures that sensitive medical data is securely stored and accessed only with patient authorization, reinforcing both privacy and continuity of care.

Moreover, Swasthya Connect emphasizes inclusivity through its user interface design. It features multilingual dashboards tailored for different user roles—patients, doctors, and administrators—ensuring ease of use regardless of digital literacy levels. The platform's lightweight system requirements enable implementation even in low-resource, rural healthcare facilities.

The project also aligns closely with key national initiatives like the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and the broader Digital India campaign. By digitizing healthcare access and delivery, it contributes to the government's goal of equitable, transparent, and technology-driven public service infrastructure.

Ultimately, Swasthya Connect aspires to be more than just a software system. It is a scalable framework designed to modernize legacy hospital operations, improve patient satisfaction, and enable data-driven governance in the public healthcare sector. The following sections detail the research foundation, system architecture, implementation process, and real-world performance of this transformative platform.

Literature Review

India's public healthcare system is burdened by rising patient volumes, outdated infrastructure, and inefficient workflows. According to NITI Aayog (2018), government hospitals face chronic issues including overcrowding, staff shortages, and fragmented data handling[8]. Manual appointment processes and paper-based health records continue to hamper care delivery, resulting in long wait times and administrative delays.

Numerous global studies highlight the potential of digital health technologies to address these issues. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Radio Frequency Identification (RFID), and Blockchain have shown transformative impact in healthcare systems worldwide. In developed nations, these tools have been adopted to automate patient triage, monitor hospital resources in real time, and secure sensitive medical data.

AI-powered scheduling systems have been shown to improve efficiency by predicting patient loads and adjusting appointment slots dynamically. Eric T. (2019) found that AI-based outpatient scheduling reduced patient no-shows and ensured more balanced workloads for doctors[1]. Machine learning algorithms also help in prioritizing emergency cases, improving triage accuracy and overall responsiveness.

RFID, as detailed by Samuel et al. (2013), supports real-time tracking of assets and personnel within hospital premises[6]. Hospitals using RFID have reported faster location tracking for equipment, streamlined patient movement, and improved emergency preparedness. These capabilities are particularly valuable in large or resource-constrained hospitals.

Blockchain adds another vital layer to hospital information systems. It offers decentralized, tamper-proof storage of health records, enabling patients to control access to their data. Research by Cornelius et al. (2019) demonstrates how blockchain enhances both data security and system interoperability, ensuring that health information is reliable, traceable, and easily shared between departments[3].

In India, adoption of these technologies has been limited to pilot projects and research studies. The National Digital Health Mission (NDHM) and Ayushman Bharat initiatives support digital transformation but have yet to deliver fully integrated hospital systems on a wide scale. Infrastructure gaps, lack of digital literacy, and financial constraints remain key barriers[7].

Swasthya Connect aims to bridge this gap by offering a unified platform that combines AI, RFID, and Blockchain. Unlike many siloed solutions, it addresses multiple hospital challenges through one modular system. It is also aligned with global standards such as HL7, GDPR, and FHIR, ensuring future compatibility and compliance.

Thus, this review highlights the relevance and readiness for Swasthya Connect's deployment. By integrating proven global technologies into a single, adaptable framework, it responds directly to the persistent inefficiencies documented across India's public healthcare literature.

Methodology

The development of Swasthya Connect followed a structured and iterative research methodology combining both qualitative and quantitative approaches. The goal was to ensure that the final system design reflected the practical needs of public hospitals while incorporating robust, scalable technologies.

1. Problem Analysis and Field Research

The project began with an extensive analysis of existing workflows in government hospitals. Field visits were conducted at three public hospitals in Delhi. Observations and semi-structured interviews were carried out with doctors, administrative staff, nurses, and patients. These engagements revealed key challenges, including appointment delays, equipment misplacement, and patient dissatisfaction due to lack of information access.

2. System Design and Prototyping

A modular, microservice-based architecture was chosen to support scalability and independent deployment of features. Design tools like Figma were used to create wireframes and high-fidelity prototypes for patient, doctor, and admin dashboards. These interfaces were tested with user groups to ensure clarity, accessibility, and support for multilingual users.

3. Technology Stack Evaluation

After comparing various options, the following stack was finalized:

- **Frontend**: React.js for responsive, component-based UI
- **Backend**: Node.js and Express for asynchronous API handling
- **Database**: MongoDB and Firebase for real-time, scalable storage
- **AI Engine**: Python (scikit-learn) for dynamic appointment scheduling
- **Blockchain**: Ethereum smart contracts for secure record management

- **RFID Integration**: JavaScript-based middleware linked to RFID reader hardware

4. Pilot Implementation and Testing

A simulated hospital environment was created using dummy data for 500 patients, 15 doctors, and over 50 RFID-tagged devices. The system underwent unit testing, integration testing, and user acceptance testing (UAT). Key metrics evaluated included wait time reduction, dashboard responsiveness, appointment accuracy, and EHR retrieval speed.

5. Data Collection and Analysis

Quantitative data such as average wait times, equipment search durations, and user satisfaction scores were collected during the simulation. Additionally, feedback logs and usability surveys helped refine workflows and improve UI design.

This mixed-method approach ensured that Swasthya Connect remained grounded in real-world needs while leveraging cutting-edge technologies.

System Design & Implementation

Swasthya Connect is built on a modular, microservice-oriented architecture, designed for flexibility, scalability, and ease of deployment in diverse hospital environments. The system is composed of four major components: AI Scheduler, RFID Tracker, Blockchain-based Health Records, and Role-Based Dashboards.

1. Modular Architecture

Each module is developed as an independent service, communicating via secure RESTful APIs. This design allows hospitals to adopt individual features as needed and scale up gradually. For example, a facility may begin with the appointment scheduling system and later integrate RFID tracking or blockchain-based record management.

2. AI-Based Scheduling Engine

The AI Scheduler is built using Python and scikit-learn libraries. It analyzes historical patient flow, doctor availability, consultation duration, and urgency levels to dynamically allocate time slots. The engine adjusts schedules in real-time, minimizing idle time and reducing patient wait times.

This model was trained using dummy datasets that mimic real hospital loads and includes built-in triage scoring to prioritize emergency cases. Appointment logic is exposed through APIs consumed by web and mobile interfaces.

3. RFID Tracking System

The RFID component enables real-time tracking of staff, patients, beds, and mobile medical equipment. Passive RFID tags are embedded in ID cards and attached to equipment, while fixed-position readers scan and relay data.

JavaScript-based middleware interfaces with the RFID hardware and streams location updates to administrators. The dashboard visualizes the live layout of wards and resource locations, helping staff reduce time spent locating critical assets.

4. Blockchain Health Records

Patient data is stored on a blockchain ledger using Ethereum smart contracts. This approach ensures data immutability and secure, consent-based access. Only authorized users, as defined by patients, can retrieve records.

For performance, a hybrid storage model is used: metadata and access permissions are stored on-chain,

while detailed medical files are stored off-chain in encrypted form. This ensures faster access without compromising integrity.

5. User Interfaces and Dashboards

Role-specific dashboards are developed using React.js. Patients, doctors, and administrators each receive tailored views with relevant features. Interfaces are multilingual and optimized for low-bandwidth conditions. Notification systems, developed using Firebase, inform users about appointments, updates, and medical events via SMS or email.

This comprehensive design ensures Swasthya Connect can operate efficiently in real-world healthcare settings while remaining future-ready and policy-compliant.

Results and Analysis

The pilot implementation of Swasthya Connect in a simulated hospital environment yielded significant improvements in operational efficiency, user experience, and system performance. The results reflect the system's capacity to address longstanding challenges in public healthcare delivery.

1. Patient Wait Time Reduction

One of the most immediate benefits observed was the reduction in patient wait times. Prior to system implementation, average waiting periods ranged from 2 to 3 hours in outpatient departments. With the AI Scheduler in place, this dropped to approximately 45 minutes. The dynamic slot allocation system ensured more efficient doctor-patient engagement and reduced idle time.

2. Improved Scheduling Accuracy

The AI module eliminated manual appointment errors such as double bookings and overlapping time slots. During testing, scheduling conflicts were reduced by over 85%. Emergency cases were correctly prioritized based on the triage model, further improving system reliability.

3. RFID Tracking Efficiency

The RFID system significantly improved resource tracking. The average time to locate equipment was reduced from 12–17 minutes to under 2 minutes. Doctors' movements were tracked in real time, ensuring better coordination, especially in emergency scenarios. The live dashboard maintained a 98% uptime during the pilot phase, offering consistent visibility to administrators.

4. Blockchain Data Access

Access to electronic health records (EHRs) became almost instantaneous. Record retrieval, which previously required 10–15 minutes manually, was reduced to under 2 seconds for authorized users. Patients appreciated the consent-driven access model, with over 80% expressing trust in the system's data security during feedback sessions.

5. User Feedback and Satisfaction

Quantitative surveys conducted post-pilot indicated strong user approval:

- 91% of patients preferred the new appointment system.
- 76% of administrative staff reported reduced workload.
- 88% of doctors felt their workflow was more structured and predictable.

Multilingual interfaces and notification systems were well-received, especially by elderly and first-time users, demonstrating the platform's inclusivity.

Overall, the pilot validated Swasthya Connect's design assumptions. It demonstrated the platform's effectiveness in improving efficiency, transparency, and user satisfaction in a typical public hospital setting.

Discussion

The pilot implementation of Swasthya Connect highlights its potential to significantly improve public healthcare delivery by leveraging intelligent, real-time, and secure digital systems. The results underscore the importance of integrating emerging technologies with practical, user-focused design in the healthcare context.

1. Automation and Efficiency

One of the most notable outcomes was the reduction in manual workload. The AI-powered appointment scheduling system streamlined bookings, dynamically adjusted doctor availability, and eliminated scheduling conflicts. This not only reduced patient wait-times but also allowed administrative staff and doctors to focus more on clinical care rather than paperwork and coordination.

By minimizing human intervention in routine operations, the platform enabled scalability without a proportional increase in resources. This is especially relevant for government hospitals that often operate under resource constraints.

2. Real-Time Resource Visibility

The RFID tracking system added significant agility to hospital operations. Administrators could instantly locate staff, beds, or equipment using the live dashboard. This capability improved emergency responsiveness and reduced delays caused by misplaced assets. The real-time nature of the data also allowed decision-makers to dynamically allocate resources based on current hospital conditions.

3. Data Security and Trust

Blockchain integration ensured that patient health data remained tamper-proof and accessible only to authorized users. The consent-driven access model gave patients control over who could view their records, reinforcing transparency and trust. This feature is critical in public healthcare, where concerns over data misuse or privacy breaches are common.

4. Inclusivity and Accessibility

The multilingual user interfaces and simplified navigation allowed even first-time or digitally inexperienced users to interact comfortably with the system. This inclusiveness is vital for public hospitals, which serve a demographically diverse population, including elderly, low-literate, and rural users.

5. Areas for Improvement

Despite the overall success, certain limitations were observed. RFID performance dropped in environments with high electromagnetic interference. Blockchain read/write speeds were slower during bulk operations, indicating a need for optimization or hybrid data storage models. Reliable power and internet connectivity also remain prerequisites for smooth system functioning—factors that can pose challenges in rural settings.

In summary, Swasthya Connect demonstrates that digital transformation of public hospitals is both feasible and impactful when grounded in real-world user needs.

Conclusion & Future Work

Conclusion

At its core, Swasthya Connect is a modular digital health platform integrating AI-driven appointment scheduling, RFID-based resource tracking, and blockchain-secured electronic health records. It simplifies hospital workflows by automating routine processes, enabling real-time visibility of assets, and providing patients with secure, consent-driven access to their medical data.

Key outcomes of the pilot include a 60% reduction in average patient wait times, a dramatic decrease in

appointment scheduling errors, and improved record retrieval speed. Feedback from users across stakeholder groups—patients, doctors, and administrators—was overwhelmingly positive. Multilingual support and intuitive dashboards ensured that the system remained accessible to all, including those with limited digital literacy.

The system's compliance with national digital health initiatives like the Ayushman Bharat Digital Mission and Digital India also reinforces its relevance in India's healthcare policy landscape. Its flexible architecture and cost-effective design make it well-suited for deployment in both urban and rural hospitals.

Future Work

While the current version of Swasthya Connect covers outpatient services and basic diagnostic workflows, several areas have been identified for future enhancement:

- **Inpatient and Emergency Care Modules**: Extending RFID tracking and appointment scheduling to in-hospital movements, admissions, and emergency triage will improve continuity of care.
- **Pharmacy and Lab Integration**: Adding modules for real-time inventory tracking, prescription validation, and automated lab result uploads will create a more comprehensive digital ecosystem.
- **Offline Functionality**: To support rural deployments, the system will be enhanced with Progressive Web App (PWA) capabilities, allowing it to work offline and sync when connectivity is restored.
- **Blockchain Optimization**: Shifting to Layer-2 blockchain solutions like Polygon can improve speed and reduce transaction costs, especially for bulk data operations.
- **Analytics Dashboard**: Incorporating a data analytics layer will help administrators and policymakers monitor trends, forecast demand, and allocate resources more effectively.

Swasthya Connect is not just a technical product but a foundation for broader healthcare reform. With continued development, stakeholder engagement, and institutional support, it has the potential to redefine digital healthcare delivery across India.

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