NSE Foundation initiated its projects in aspirational districts in 2018 and one of the selected districts was Karauli in Rajasthan ranked by Niti Ayog. Various programmes in the focus areas of Primary Education, Water & Sanitation, Elder Care and Environment Sustainability were commenced for holistic development of the district.

Among the projects, a project titled – "Sustainable Environment and Livelihoods through Soil & Water Conservation and Improving Soil Health" with Self-Reliant Initiatives through Joint Action (SRIJAN) was implemented for sustainable livelihood interventions with rural families in 76 villages of two marginal blocks, i.e., Mandrail and Sapotra.

As this region suffers from soil erosion and fertility loss, the upper ridge areas grappled with low soil depth, lesser fertility, and higher dependency on surface water. Scanty monthly rainfall was another challenge in the area.

The project worked towards conservation and recharging of water resources by capturing surplus runoff within the river sub-basin and micro- watershed, thus reducing water and soil losses. Simultaneously, the programme team worked on improving water productivity, land productivity and de-risking the present farm-based livelihoods, and, most importantly, change the community’s behaviour to effective water governance and management.

The efforts of the project have led to construction of 115 water harvesting structures with potential of 1,6493 billion litres, 2480.73 acres of land converted from unproductive land to cultivatable land, 2921 farmers have been demonstrated for natural farming practices.

I am glad that this coffee table book has been created to give a glimpse of the project and the communities that it has reached.

Renu Mohan-
CEO, NSE Foundation
It is with immense joy and gratitude that I present this coffee table book, which highlights the remarkable work of SRIJAN and its impact on the lives of the people in Karauli district, Rajasthan. SRIJAN, a public charitable trust, has been tirelessly working for the past 23 years to improve the lives of rural families in 17 backward districts across four states in India.

The name SRIJAN, which means ‘an act of creation’ in Sanskrit, reflects the organization’s vision to promote self-reliance and joint action in poverty alleviation models. This approach has been critical in creating sustainable change in the communities we serve, and this coffee table book beautifully captures the spirit of SRIJAN and its positive impact on the lives of rural families in Karauli district.

We celebrate the hard work, dedication, and commitment of the SRIJAN team and the achievements of the communities we serve.

The support of NSE Foundation has been instrumental in accelerating change in Karauli district. The construction and renovation of 115 water harvesting structures have led to a water recharge potential of 1.6493 billion litres, ensuring water security to the local communities. Soil and moisture conservation initiatives have successfully treated 12617 acres of land and converted 2480.73 acres from unproductive to cultivable through pond silt application. This integrated approach has benefited 20,885 beneficiaries in the last three years.

This coffee table book stands as a testament to our dedication to sustainable development and collaboration with stakeholders. It is a celebration of the positive changes that can be achieved through our approach.

We are proud of the achievements of the communities, and we hope that this book will inspire and encourage others to support our mission and help create a positive change in the lives of the most vulnerable in our society.

Once again, we extend our profound gratitude to NSE Foundation for their support and partnership in our journey towards a better tomorrow.

Prasanna Khemariya-
CEO, SRIJAN
About Karauli

Karauli in eastern Rajasthan, ranked as an aspirational district by Niti Ayog, has been selected by NSE Foundation for sustainable livelihood interventions. SRIJAN undertook the project, benefitting rural families in 76 villages across Mandrayal and Sapotara blocks.
Project Summary

Karauli region is categorized under hilly terrain with no lofty peaks and rugged ravines. The ravines area suffers soil erosion and fertility losses due to the nearby Chambal River.

The upper ridge areas were grappled with low soil depth, lesser fertility, and higher dependency on surface water. The monthly rainfall coefficient varies between 50 to 69% between June to September, based on decadal rainfall analysis.

The consumption of synthetic fertilizers rose to 158.70% in a decade, negatively impacting soil & consumer health. Even the percentage of area under micro-irrigation and share of high-value crops to the total sown area were deficient, i.e., 1.71% and 1.98%, respectively, as in 2018.

All these factors contributed to an increase in marginality coefficient to farmers and, subsequently, impacted the environment with farmers' non-sustainable practices.
Analyzing the problem statement SRIJAN developed a roadmap for NSE Foundation to work in these villages with a project titled – “Sustainable Environment and Livelihoods through Soil & Water Conservation And Improving Soil Health.” the SRIJAN team focussed on implementing activities favorable for both stakeholders, farmers and the environment.

The defined objectives of the projects were:

- To improve the land quality and augment water through the demonstration of community-driven soil and water conservation methods
- To demonstrate methods of regeneration and climate-smart agriculture practices having the potential to improve land quality, and it’s productivity
- To demonstrate water conservation technology and improve water productivity
- To demonstrate methods of de-risking agriculture through diversification of production system
- To enhance community capacity for effective management and conservation of resources for sustainable environment and livelihoods.
Given the challenges, a well-developed management plan catering to supply and demand was needed. The supply side management has been addressed through conservation and recharges by capturing surplus runoff within the river sub-basin and micro-watershed, reducing water and soil losses.

At the same time, the demand-side management interventions are done on a technological front to improve water productivity, land productivity and de-risking the present farm-based livelihoods, and, most importantly, change the community's behaviour to effective water governance and management.
SRIJAN’s Implementation Strategy

- De-risking agriculture through diversification
- Improved Technology - Efficient Irrigation and Solar Power
- Soil & Water Conservation
- Pasture Development and Livestock
- Improve Soil Health

Village Development Committee
SUSTAINED IMPROVEMENT IN WATER SECURITY, PREVENTION OF PROTECTIVE TOP SOIL, LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE, COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN DEVELOPMENT PLAN AND LEVERAGE RESOURCES

- Enhanced Water capture & soil loss prevented at sub catchment and farm level
- Enhanced fodder availability & regenerative green coverage in open pasture
- Enhanced production of smart agriculture commodity & food crop
- Improved governance & management of assets created & VDC functioning
- Dovetailing Government schemes and programmes

1. Community driven planning and development for NRM
2. Sub Catchment level NRM
3. Onfarm water and soil management level NRM
4. Usage of appropriate technology
5. Regenerative & climate smart agriculture
6. Local Governance & Institutional strengthening
Hence, soil and water conservation and management have become imperative to address environmental sustainability and the welfare of people. Efforts have been made to develop an effective partnership between different stakeholders like the government has been essential to ensure the long-term strategic development of the region's sustainability.

The critical outcomes through implementation of the project started from the 1st August 2019, and lasted till 31st July 2022 in three years, as the SRIJAN team reached out to 3419 beneficiaries directly and 17466 beneficiaries indirectly.
TOTAL 74 VILLAGE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEES (VDCS) ARE FORMED IN 76 VILLAGES WITH TOTAL MEMBERSHIP OF 4028 MEMBERS
The village development committee's (VDC'S) have been strengthened in soil, water, and environment-related issues, raising their awareness on a government scheme, and training them to submit their demand to the line department directly or through gram panchayat as deemed fit.
1.6493 BILLION LITRES OF WATER HARVESTING POTENTIAL CREATED THROUGH CONSTRUCTION & RENOVATION OF 115 WATER HARVESTING STRUCTURES INCLUDING EARTHEN DAMS & MASONRY CHECK DAMS
87.1 ACRES OF ADDITIONAL LAND BROUGHT UNDER SOLAR BASED IRRIGATION SYSTEM AND 339.76 ACRES THROUGH MICRO-IRRIGATION.
Water Chestnuts Cultivation in Renovated Earthen Dam in Sapotara Block of the Karauli District
Display Boards for Transparency, Outlets & Pitching in earthen dams and Impacts on Wells in downstream through Water Harvesting Structures Constructed
Increased Water Levels for Drinking Water Sources and Community Members Expressing their Happiness for the Interventions
2480.73 ACRES OF LAND CONVERTED FROM UNPRODUCTIVE LAND TO CULTIVATABLE LAND THROUGH POND SILT APPLICATION AND CONSTRUCTION OF EARTHEN STRUCTURES AT RAVINES
Construction of Earthen Bunds for Soil & Moisture Retention in Ravines Area
2921 farmers have been demonstrated with natural farming practices led to improved soil health through promotion of use of organic extracts & fertilisers.
482.41 ACRES OF LAND COVERED UNDER CROP DIVERSIFICATION INCLUDING ORGANIC VEGETABLE CULTIVATION AND HORTICULTURE PLANTATION
Interaction of Government Officials with Team and Farmers at an Event "Amrood Mahatsav" in Mandrayal Block of the Karauli District
Intercropping of Papaya, Guava Orchards Establishment and Organic Vegetable Cultivation for Crop Diversification
SRIJAN is a public charitable trust registered in National Capital Territory of Delhi

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