Chapter-1

Need of Agriculture Improvement

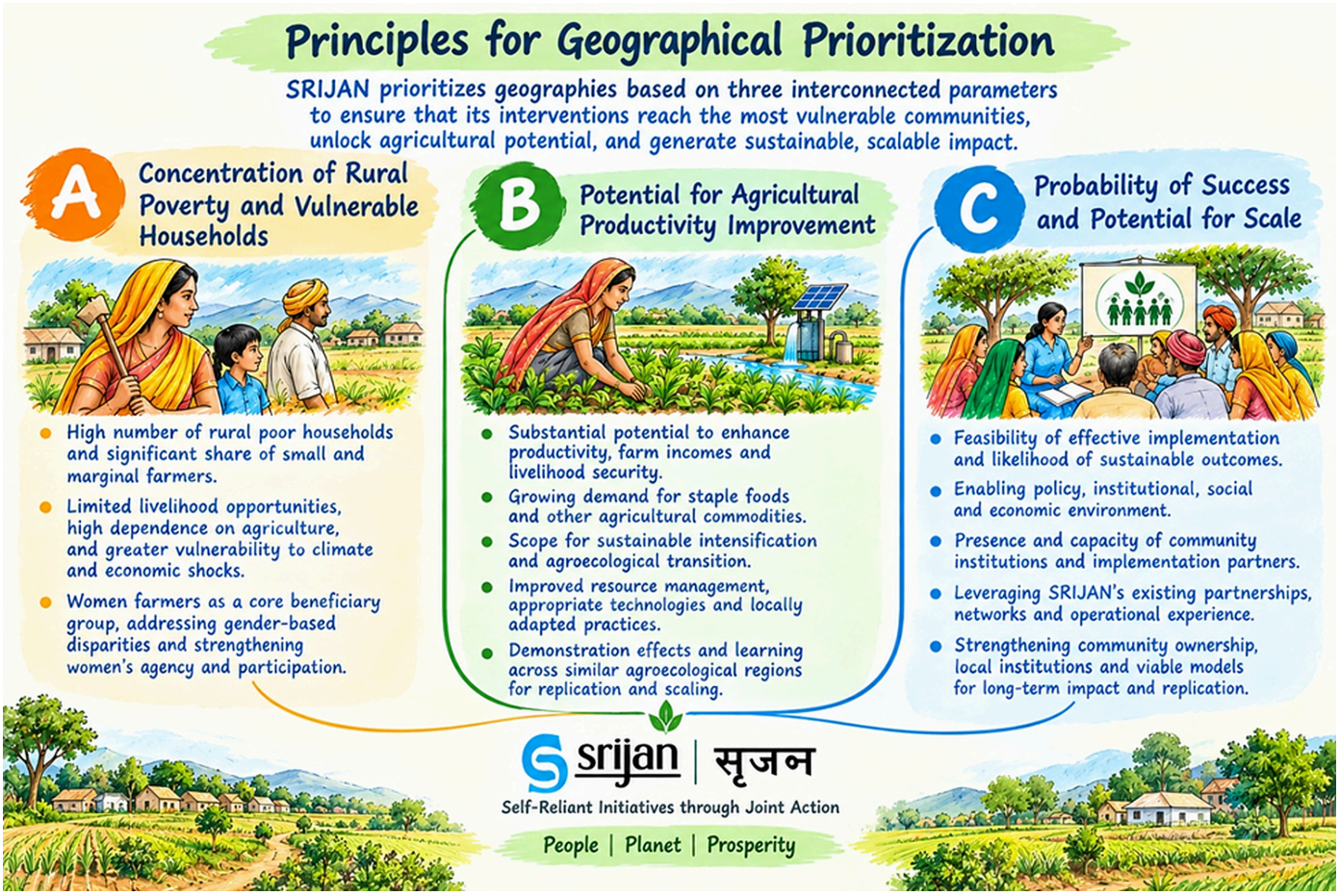
SRIJAN's Geographical Focus and Prioritization

SRIJAN prioritizes geographically disadvantaged and economically lagging regions where rural poverty, low agricultural productivity, and limited livelihood opportunities constrain the well-being of rural communities. These regions have historically experienced lower agricultural productivity and lower per capita income, making small and marginal farmers particularly vulnerable to economic and environmental shocks.

The most agriculture vulnerable states are Bihar, Rajasthan, Madhya Pradesh, Odisha, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand, Chhattisgarh, and Jammu & Kashmir, with an emphasis on rural, underserved, and climate-vulnerable areas were integrated agriculture and livelihood interventions. Currently SRIJAN selected Bundelkhand region, Vidarbha region, MP, CG and Rajasthan states.

SRIJAN prioritizes geographies based on three interconnected parameters:

Principles for Geographical Prioritization



Rational of Agriculture Intervention in SRIJAN

Agriculture is Foundation of Rural Livelihoods and Economic Development: Agriculture plays a vital role in India's socio-economic fabric, supporting rural livelihoods, food security, and the broader economy. Beyond food production, it provides employment and income to millions of rural households and serves as a foundation for allied sectors and rural enterprises. With growing population and food demand, improving agricultural productivity and ensuring sustainable growth remain essential for poverty reduction, livelihood security, and inclusive economic development.

For SRIJAN, agriculture is not merely a production activity; it is a fundamental pathway to improving the livelihoods, well-being, and resilience of rural families, particularly small and marginal farmers and women who depend heavily on agriculture for their livelihoods.

Degradation of Natural Resources and Declining Agricultural Productivity

Agriculture depends on finite natural resources such as land, water, forests, and biodiversity, which face increasing pressure from intensive use and climate change. SRIJAN promotes sustainable and regenerative resource management to enhance agricultural productivity, ecological balance, and long-term livelihood resilience. Land degradation, declining soil health, water scarcity, and the depletion of natural resources directly threaten agricultural productivity and rural livelihoods.

SRIJAN therefore recognizes the need to promote resource-efficient, ecologically sound, and locally adapted agricultural practices that improve productivity while conserving the natural resource base.

Increasing Climate Vulnerability and Agricultural Risks

Agriculture, particularly rainfed farming, is highly sensitive to climate variability and climate change. Erratic rainfall, prolonged dry spells, droughts, rising temperatures, and other climatic disturbances increase uncertainty in agricultural production specially in Kharif season.

Small and marginal farmers are particularly vulnerable because of their limited access to resources, information, technology, and institutional support. Their ability to anticipate, respond to, and recover from climate-related shocks is often constrained, resulting in crop failure, income instability, and increased livelihood insecurity.

SRIJAN considers strengthening the climate resilience of farming systems and rural communities a critical priority. This requires promoting climate-resilient crop planning, water budgeting, diversified farming systems, locally adapted seeds, soil moisture conservation, reduce the market dependency and improved farmer decision-making.

Low Agricultural Productivity and Limited Economic Returns

Despite its importance to rural livelihoods, agriculture continues to face challenges related to low productivity, inadequate returns to farm labour, and limited economic opportunities, particularly for small and marginal farmers. As a result, agriculture often struggles to provide adequate and reliable income for rural households.

The Need for a Farmer-Centric Approach

The increasing fragmentation of landholdings has made it difficult for many small and marginal farmers to achieve economies of scale or independently invest in agricultural technologies, irrigation, quality seeds, and farm equipment.
Their vulnerability is further compounded by volatile agricultural input and output prices, limited access to timely information, and increasing climate-related uncertainties.

SRIJAN therefore emphasizes strengthening farmers' access to essential resources, knowledge, skills, and institutional services. Community-based mechanisms such as seed banks, Bio-Resource Centers (BRCs), Custom Hiring Centers, and farmer collectives can help overcome resource constraints and make appropriate agricultural services more accessible and affordable.

Women Centrality

Rural women contribute significantly to agricultural production, livestock management, post-harvest activities, and natural resource management. However, their contribution often remains underrecognized, while their access to agricultural information, technology, productive resources, institutional support, and decision-making opportunities is frequently limited.

SRIJAN believes that improving agricultural livelihoods requires recognizing women as farmers, knowledge holders, entrepreneurs, and decision-makers. Accordingly, SRIJAN places women at the center of its agricultural interventions, strengthening their access to resources, knowledge, skills, and economic opportunities. At the same time, engaging men and other household members is essential to building supportive family environments, promoting shared responsibilities, and enabling women to exercise meaningful decision-making authority.

Post-Harvest Losses and Weak Market Linkages

Inadequate storage, handling, processing, and market infrastructure, coupled with fragmented value chains and limited access to timely market information, contribute to post-harvest losses and inefficient agricultural marketing. Farmers, particularly small and marginal producers, often face limited negotiating power, high transaction costs, and dependence on intermediaries, which can reduce price realization and overall farm profitability.

SRIJAN's Approach: Strengthening Farmers' Capacities for Sustainable Agricultural:

SRIJAN believes that agriculture can become a viable pathway for rural prosperity when farmers are empowered to make informed decisions, manage risks, and improve the productivity and sustainability of their farming systems.

Its approach focuses on strengthening farmers' capacities through the **RKSA framework—Resource, Knowledge, Skill, and Attitude**—while promoting locally appropriate, agroecology-based and climate-resilient agricultural practices.

Through integrated interventions in natural resource management, natural farming, climate-resilient crop planning, seed systems, bio-resource management, and community-based agricultural services, SRIJAN seeks to improve farm productivity, reduce production risks, strengthen livelihood security, and enhance the overall well-being of rural families.

