

Using Transformative Scenario Planning to think critically about the future of water in rural Jalna, India

January 2018

www.assar.uct.ac.za



Written by Eshwer Kale, Pragati Khabiya and Vikas Joshi from the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR)

The five-year ASSAR project (Adaptation at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions, 2014-2018) uses insights from multi-scale, interdisciplinary work to inform and transform climate adaptation policy and practice in ways that promote the long-term wellbeing of the most vulnerable and those with the least agency.

KEY POINTS

- From across the system, 40 stakeholder representatives of Jalna district – farmers from landholding categories, landless, poor, women, members of the Grampanchayat, farmer movements, government officials, a scientist of the water sector, academic institutions, college students, NGOs and media – voiced their varied concerns and perspectives about the water situation in Jalna.
- Participants agreed that the implementation of government policies and programmes, and collective action to manage the water resources are the two most important aspects which can help Jalna district address the water situation in the future.
- All participants were excited to be part of this important dialogue. They valued the openness of the process and actively engaged in the same.
- There was unanimous consensus that the TSP process should lead to concrete action executed at different levels while engaging the diverse stakeholders.

Transformative Scenario Planning in Jalna

Jalna, a drought-prone district in the Marathwada region of Maharashtra in India, faces serious water challenges. Some of the causes are recurrent drought, drought-like conditions and notable weather changes, crop loss and failure, and increasing demand on groundwater by farmers, industry and urbanisation, with declining groundwater levels. Water scarcity for domestic and livelihood needs of rural households is of grave concern. In recent times, thousands of families migrated to cities and towns in distress, in search of sustenance. While water requirements for industry and urban needs are met from the Jayakwadi dam, most of the rural population depends on declining groundwater and infrequent tankers in times of scarcity. At the same time, villages, NGOs and government have taken up water conservation projects, such as watershed development and the Mahatma Gandhi National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (MGNREGS), with encouraging results. Demand-side management practices, however, are poorly followed. Other practices, such as lifting safe groundwater into surface 'farm ponds', aggravate inequity and increase evaporation losses, while the improper implementation of land treatment projects affects the biophysical structure of land with long-term impacts on water availability.

Finding sustainable solutions to this complex water issue is beyond the capacity of any single agency. It necessitates the active engagement of all stakeholders. Developed by Reos Partners, Transformative Scenario Planning (TSP) offers a neutral space for stakeholders to present their views, and construct a shared understanding of the situation and the actions they can take to address it. In short, TSP offers a way for social systems to get unstuck and move forward. This report provides an overview of the first TSP workshop titled 'Water Situation in Rural Jalna in 2030: For Domestic and Livelihood Needs'. It was presented by the Watershed Organisation Trust (WOTR) from 18-19 September 2017 at Krushi Vidnyan Kendra, Jalna, in the local language of Marathi.

The workshop process



Step 1: Inviting the participants with diverse perspectives

The workshop brought together 40 women and men representing various groups, who have a stake and may influence the water situation in Jalna district. The participant group consisted of farmers from different categories (rainfed, irrigated, horticulture, livestock), landless, women, members of Grampanchayat and CBOs, government officials from district and block levels, community leaders, academic institutes, scientists, NGOs, private institutions, journalists, industries and students. Participants voiced their opinions regarding water in the district.

The important concerns raised were:

- decreasing livelihood opportunities in rural areas;
- changes in livestock pattern;
- distress migration to cities;
- health problems due to inadequate and polluted water;
- farmer suicides because of crop losses/failure and the debt burden;
- water privatisation observed in packaged water bottles and farm ponds etc.;
- increase in cultivating water-guzzling crops; increase in tanker dependency;
- climate-related events such as unseasonal weather events and temperature rise;
- inadequate resources; and
- the lack of political will to solve the water problem.



Some questions raised by the participants:

- Can we sense what is possibly going to happen in the future?
- How can recurrent drought-like conditions in Jalna be addressed effectively?
- To what extent would the climatic factors affect water availability and livelihoods? And, will despairing farmers commit suicide in the future?
- Can farmers change their approach and use water more judiciously and also share water with other farmers?
- How will the increasing demand of water by industry affect the demands for agriculture and domestic use in rural areas?
- Can Public Private Partnership (PPP) be strengthened to address the different water challenges?
- Will state government show firm willingness and deploy adequate resources to implement the existing laws and acts in the water sector?
- Can this TSP workshop lead to concrete actions?

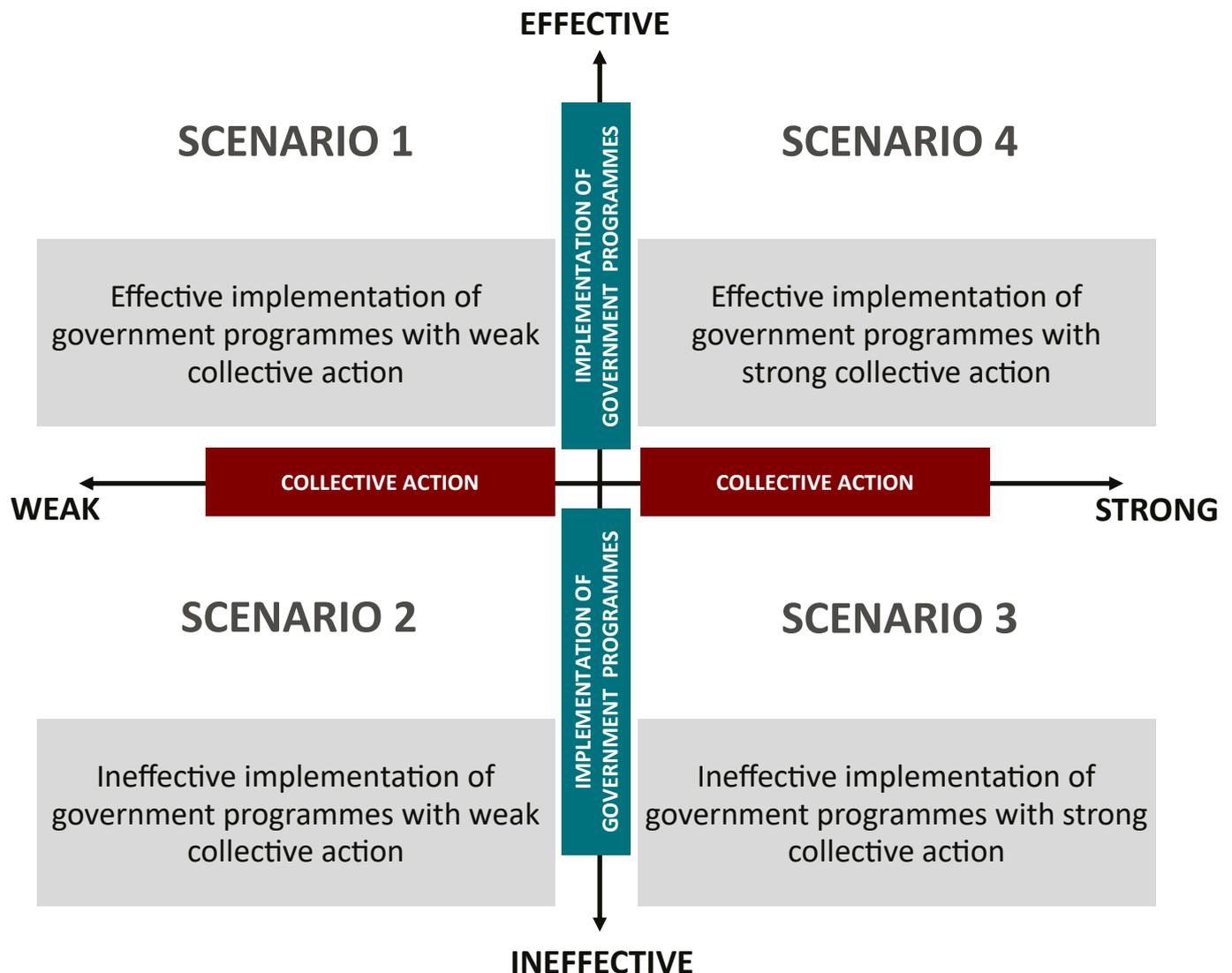


Step 2: Identifying the main drivers of the water problem in Jalna district

To understand the current situation in the water and related sectors in Jalna district and in the state of Maharashtra, headlines from mainstream newspapers of the last two months were used. The exercise illustrated how water is associated with the Social, Technological, Economic, Ecological, and Political (STEEP) aspects.

One-on-one sharing during a paired walk helped participants to voice their concerns about the future of water in the district. In an iterative process, 21 drivers were identified which were broadly clustered as: water management, crop planning, new technologies, mentality of water users, water policies and their implementation, impacts of climate change, water allocation and access, deforestation and depleting groundwater. Following a voting process, debate and discussion, these were narrowed down to two highly uncertain and most impactful drivers which have high potential to influence the water situation in Jalna.

These key drivers 1) **Implementation of Government Programmes** (Effective/Ineffective Implementation) and 2) **Collective Action** (Strong/Weak) form the axes for the possible future scenario construction.





Step 3: Constructing stories about what could happen in the future

Based on the interactions of the driving forces plotted on two axes, participants were divided into four groups to work on building scenarios. User-friendly material – chart paper of different colours, coloured sheets, modelling clay, crayons, colour sketch pens, scissors and glue – was provided to the four groups to develop their models of how, in their given context, they imagined the water situation in Jalna district in 2030.



After presenting the models to the others and receiving feedback, each group prepared the headlines indicating the different steps in the process that would move from the current context to the respective possible scenario in 2030 (as constructed by the group). At every step, the participants were urged to build scenarios that were challenging, yet plausible and relevant to the Jalna context. After integrating the feedback from other participants, each group presented their story to the plenary in the form of role play.



Way forward

The stories constructed during the workshop will be collated and refined by the scenario writing team in the next few months. A one-day writeshop is planned, whereafter the storywriters will invite suggestions and feedback from selected participants of their respective groups and others to ensure that the stories are relevant, challenging, clear and plausible. These stories will then serve as the foundation for strategic planning in the second workshop to be held in January 2018. The aim of this second TSP workshop is to identify the next steps to address the current scenario – actions that could potentially transform the future of water in Jalna district.



ABOUT ASSAR

ASSAR uses insights from multiple-scale, interdisciplinary work to improve the understanding of the barriers, enablers and limits to effective, sustained and widespread climate change adaptation out to the 2030s. Working in seven countries in Africa and South Asia, ASSAR's regional teams research socio-ecological dynamics relating to livelihood transitions, and the access, use and management of land and water. One of four consortia under the Collaborative Adaptation Research Initiative in Africa and Asia (CARIAA), ASSAR generates new knowledge of climate change hotspots to influence policy and practice and to change the way researchers and practitioners interact.

ABOUT WOTR'S WATER STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

This project brings together rural stakeholders from various levels to interact and work on surface and groundwater management (supply and demand side) in a climate-varying context with attention to crop productivity. The knowledge that emerged from the research findings, the concerns of environmental (sustainability) and social (equity) interactions, as well as aspirations of the local communities is brought together in the Water Stewardship Initiative for piloting the major principles of the Maharashtra Groundwater (Development and Management) Act, 2009.



This workshop was carried out with guidance from Reos Partners through the Adaption at Scale in Semi-Arid Regions (ASSAR) project supported by UK Government's Department for International Development (DfID) and the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada. We acknowledge Hindustan Unilever Foundation (HUF) for providing the financial support for the Water Stewardship Initiative and this workshop. The views expressed in this work are those of the creators and do not necessarily represent those of DfID and IDRC, its Board of Governors, the HUF and WOTR.

For more information: ASSAR - www.assar.uct.ac.za or email Eshwer Kale - publications@wotr.org
HUF - www.huf.co.in TSP - www.reospartners.com

Creative Commons License

This brief is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. Articles appearing in this publication may be freely quoted and reproduced provided that i) the source is acknowledged, ii) the material is not used for commercial purposes and iii) any adaptations of the material are distributed under the same license. © 2018 International Development Research Centre
Photos: Harshal Khade, Sachin Hirve, and Pragati Khabiya (all from WOTR) © Photographers
Editing and layout: Birgit Ottermann

