



# Raichur 2047: Imagining Flourishing Futures Visioning Workshop Report

July 1, 2025  
Devadurga, Raichur





Copyright © 2025 Water, Environment, Land and Livelihoods (WELL) Labs.



Open access. Some rights reserved. This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) licence. To view the full licence, visit: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

**Published** December 2025

**Contributing Authors** Ashima Chaudhary, Arjuna Srinidhi, Pavan Srinath, Syamkrishna Aryan

**Cover Image** Nanditha Gogate

**Photo Credits** Nanditha Gogate, John Thompson

**Editorial Review** Pavan Srinath, Apuurva Sridharan

**Report Formatting** Kanishka Goyal

#### **Acknowledgements:**

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to the farmers, community representatives, civic leaders, government officials, researchers, and civil society partners who participated in the Raichur 2047 visioning workshop. Their openness, insights, and imagination made it possible to collectively explore diverse pathways and futures.

We also thank Parambha, our local CSO partner, and the Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CLARE) research programme, our donors, whose commitment and contributions have been instrumental in bringing this initiative to life.

We also acknowledge the efforts of WELL Labs in convening and facilitating this space of co-creation, where diverse perspectives could meet not as separate interests but as co-creators of a shared tomorrow. for Raichur.

This work was funded by aid from the UK government and by the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), Canada, as part of the Climate Adaptation and Resilience (CLARE) research programme. The views expressed herein do not necessarily represent those of the UK government, IDRC, or its Board of Governors.

## About CLARE

CLARE is a UK-Canada framework research programme on climate adaptation and resilience, aiming to enable socially inclusive and sustainable action to build resilience to climate change and natural hazards. CLARE is an initiative jointly designed and run by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, and Canada's IDRC. It is primarily funded by aid from the UK government, along with IDRC.

## About CLARITY

CLimate Adaptation and Resilience In Tropical drYlands (CLARITY), a research project under CLARE, is building equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient development pathways in tropical drylands. This Global South-led project will result in the creation of long-term assets (data and tools) and capacities to achieve transformational change.

## About WELL Labs

[Water, Environment, Land and Livelihoods \(WELL\) Labs](#) is transforming water systems at scale across India through research, partnerships, and collective action. It takes on audacious challenges, tackling complex problems by designing comprehensive solutions that provide large social returns.

WELL Labs' work is science-led and community-focused. It addresses the interconnections between water, environment, land, and livelihoods. To create impact at scale, it embeds solutions within governments, works with the private sector, and collaborates with civil society and active citizens. Based in Bengaluru, the organisation is a part of the Institute for Financial Management and Research (IFMR) Society.

## Context and Purpose

The workshop invited residents and diverse, local stakeholders of Raichur to imagine the future of the city in 2047, the centenary year of India's independence. The participants were asked to envisage what a flourishing future for farmers, youth, women, and Raichur district's rural communities might look like. It aimed to move beyond short-term schemes and incremental fixes to collectively envision long-term transformations in agriculture and related livelihoods, land, water, and markets. The goal was to look beyond current constraints and build a shared picture to imagine possibilities that would enable equitable, sustainable, and climate-resilient futures. The intent was not to predict a single future, but to visualize multiple plausible futures that people in Raichur could imagine and shape.

The workshop brought together various stakeholders: farmers from both canal command and dryland areas, water users association representatives, panchayat representatives, civic leaders, government officials, researchers, practitioners from civil society organisations, and private-sector actors engaged in markets, inputs, and services. The diverse mix of participants enabled frank, cross-cutting conversations that ranged from transactions and schemes to shared values, aspirations, trade-offs, and roles.





## How We Approached It: The Method

We anchored the visioning exercise around ten interconnected dimensions of rural futures, such as agriculture as livelihood; water availability, access, governance; farming practices and crops; market and economy; land use; and employment / livelihoods, among others.

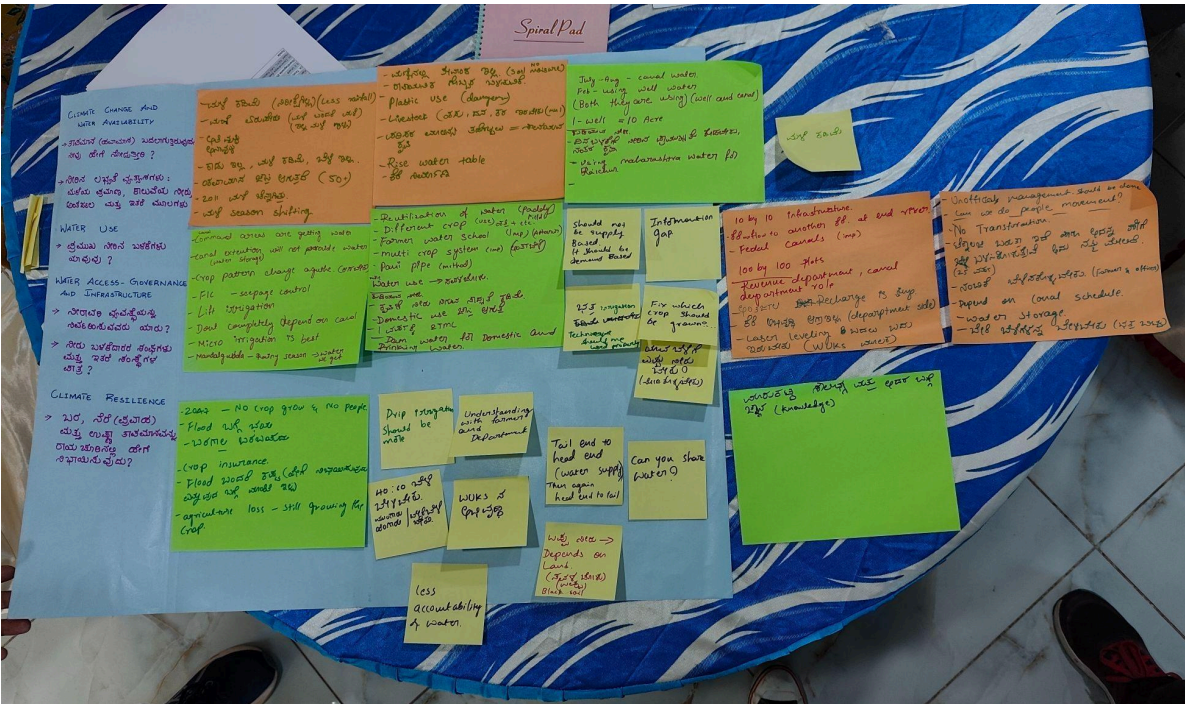
In the morning session, three breakout groups debated on different dimensions or themes of change, using guiding questions on topics such as: the role of agriculture in household incomes; the sharing and management of water under climate pressures; the kinds of crops and methods that might thrive in Raichur; and the support systems farmers could rely on, whether from the state, markets, cooperatives, or digital platforms. Other questions examined how value addition and markets would evolve, how farmland and commons would be managed, what new forms of employment would emerge, what policies and institutions would support these futures, who would benefit the most, and how soil, water, and biodiversity would regenerate or degrade.

Before leaping forward to 2047, participants first looked back 25 years, reflecting on how life in Raichur had changed since 2000. They formed three thematic groups: Land & Agriculture, Water & Climate, and Markets & Livelihoods. Each group was asked to highlight the shifts already underway in land tenure, technology adoption, water governance, migration, and market dynamics, and to use these as building blocks for imagining plausible futures.

Based on these deliberations, the WELL Labs team developed three scenarios that combined different futures on each of the dimensions. These were created as lenses through which choices, risks, and opportunities would be examined.

In the afternoon session, participants re-grouped to build storylines around how daily life, institutions, and stakeholder roles might evolve within each scenario. They also discussed what farmers, community members and others may need to do today, to prepare for these scenarios in the future.







## Three Constructed Future Scenarios

### Scenario 1: Urban Pull and Exit from Agriculture

Agriculture in Raichur becomes less central to livelihoods. Many smallholders exit farming, selling or leasing land to larger farmers or urban developers. The youth migrate to cities for education and jobs, and those who stay back turn to small businesses or wage work. Livestock numbers decline, and the existing farming is input-intensive, with heavy reliance on chemical fertilisers. Urbanisation accelerates, reshaping land use and the rural economy. The risks are significant: local food security weakens, soil degrades, chemical exposure harms health, and income gaps widen as urban-linked households advance while the rural poor are left behind.

### Scenario 2: Tech-Driven Agrarian Transformation

Agriculture remains central to the local economy, but only a few large and wealthy farmers continue in this field. Farms adopt AI, fertigation, and full mechanisation, shifting to precision farming and growing high-value crops, such as dragon fruit and avocado. Land is leased at scale by private companies, enabling capital-intensive production. Digital platforms and direct procurement replace traditional markets, while precision irrigation and water reuse improve efficiency. The youth are engaged in agri-tech roles and allied activities, such as mushroom cultivation. They use post-harvest technologies and offer value addition (e.g., processing groundnuts into snacks, or converting chilli into pickles or chilli powder). Additionally, instead of the forced entrepreneurship of smallholder agriculture, many seek a stable salary and are employed by private agricultural companies. However, there are certain risks, including dependence on external capital and technology, exclusion of smallholders, reduced demand for manual labour, and new health challenges from more sedentary lifestyles.

### Scenario 3: Green Transition with Rural Entrepreneurship

Raichur follows a hybrid route. Roughly half the farming families leave agriculture, pursuing education and other non-farm employment. The remaining farmers diversify into integrated systems combining horticulture, millets, organic and natural farming, and livestock. Local entrepreneurs, farmer collectives and women's groups emerge as service providers, ensuring alternative inputs, mechanisation support, training and value addition. This strengthens local economies and sustains rural vibrancy. Nevertheless, some risks exist: climate extremes threaten productivity; government acquisitions and corporate entry may monopolize control over land; and livelihoods, while diversified, remain vulnerable to environmental and institutional pressures.









## Insights and Takeaways

Discussions at the workshop blended optimism with concern, and revealed one strong, perhaps the most important, insight: no single future scenario is ideal. Each has different drivers, inherent risks, and actionable opportunities. Many participants imagined hybrid futures, where elements of all three scenarios coexisted in different parts of the landscape, or the scenarios represented the future for different sections of the community. In one sense, these three can be considered as pathways towards the same composite future.

Participants also acknowledged the changes they might need to undertake in their own roles. For example, with greater automation, sensors, and technology in canal operations, the traditional role of *Neerugantis* (Water men) could diminish. Yet, participants themselves imagined new roles for the same people through upskilling, such as sensor maintenance, scheduling, and data stewardship.

The main insights and takeaways gleaned by the teams from the Raichur 2047 visioning workshop are as follows.

1. **Migration can co-exist as a valid adaptation strategy.** Across scenarios, migration was both a coping strategy and an aspiration.

In some cases, participants imagined youth leaving due to distress, while in some others, urban migration was viewed as a stepping stone to start new businesses, explore new opportunities, or bring back investments. A hopeful idea of “reverse migration” emerged in the “Green Transition with Rural Entrepreneurship” scenario, where Raichur offered enough economic and educational opportunities to retain or attract young individuals.

2. **The agrarian economy is transforming, not disappearing.** Rather than a full shift away from farming, discussions revealed multiple transitions within agriculture: from subsistence to commercial and high-value crops; from individual to collective farming models; from manual to mechanized and tech-enabled operations; and from traditional livestock to specialized, market-linked allied sectors. This suggests that the future of farming is not about decline, but about redefinition. This is an important narrative locally, as conversations regarding agriculture being on the verge of collapse or disappearance can be misleading and counterproductive to meaningful collective action.

3. **Land ownership and use remains a foundational element of Raichur’s transformation.** Whether as a productive resource, a site of contestation, or a symbol of identity, land remains central to all futures. Participants explored long-term shifts in land ownership and leasing practices, expressing concern over land fragmentation and declining soil health. They also

expressed their aspirations for secured tenure over land and initiatives on regenerative land use.

4. **Access to water is a strong marker of resilience.** Access to water was consistently framed as a litmus test for livelihood stability and climate resilience. Farmers emphasized the unpredictability of rainfall and canal flows. Water Users Cooperative Society (WUCS) members discussed governance challenges and equity in distribution. Other participants linked water access to cropping decisions, migration, and health outcomes.
5. **Technology is viewed as both an enabler and divider.** Technology was seen as both a catalyst for transformation and a source of exclusion. Younger participants expressed enthusiasm for digital tools and agri-tech platforms. By contrast, older farmers and marginalized groups voiced concerns about affordability and digital literacy. The need for inclusive design and capacity building was repeatedly emphasized.
6. **Local institutions are pivotal for navigating future uncertainties.** WUCSs, Farmer Producer Organisations, and other cooperatives and collective groups were recognised as spaces where people could come together to share knowledge, work, and collectively bargain with both the private sector and state agencies. Participants called for stronger accountability and transparency in all local groups. They also suggested expanding institutional roles to include climate adaptation and market access. Trust and representation were flagged as critical for long-term legitimacy.
7. **Environmental regeneration is valued differently by diverse participants.** While some groups prioritized ecological restoration, others viewed it as secondary to immediate economic needs. Regenerative agriculture and soil conservation were discussed in the “Green Transition with Rural Entrepreneurship” scenario. In the “Tech-Driven Agrarian Transformation” and “Urban Pull and Exit from Agriculture” scenarios, environmental concerns were often overshadowed by productivity and migration pressures.
8. **Health and well-being is an emerging concern.** Health surfaced as a cross-cutting issue, especially in relation to water quality, mental stress, and changing diets. Participants linked climate variability to increased disease burden. Youth and women voiced concerns about access to healthcare and social safety nets.

## Why This Matters: From Vision to Transformation

Insights from this multi-stakeholder workshop can help shape policies, programs, markets, and public investment that are resilient to multiple futures. The scenarios offer inputs for policy design, moving beyond input subsidies towards outcome-based incentives; planning and modelling exercises, such as water budgets and climate risk simulations; program design that fosters protective irrigation, service ecosystems for mechanisation and climate-smart agriculture; and value-chain investments. They also point to new market architectures that combine Agriculture Produce Market Committees, direct buying, and digital platforms to ensure fairer risk-sharing.

## Lessons for WELL Labs on the Process

Future workshops could be strengthened by providing participants pre-reads and local-language briefs to create a shared baseline, as well as visual tools such as maps of command areas, aquifers, and market nodes. Greater inclusion of tenant farmers, landless workers, women, and youth would enrich the process further. A “data room” of quick facts on rainfall, groundwater trends, cropping patterns, migration, and prices could aid their imagination without constraining it. Scenario stress-testing, outcome metrics, and commitment mapping could make the scenarios more actionable. Finally, safeguards for smallholders and tenants, continuous learning loops, and clear pathways for upskilling roles that are likely to diminish would help ensure transitions are equitable and sustainable.

The Raichur 2047 Visioning Workshop was a rare moment where diverse stakeholders spoke not as adversaries or beneficiaries, but as co-creators of a shared future. It showed that when the frame shifts from grievance to possibility, people can imagine transformations that are bold, inclusive, and grounded in both memory and hope.



## What is Next?

The workshop serves as the starting point for ongoing engagement through:

- Focus group discussions to capture detailed stakeholder perspectives;
- Modeling exercises simulating impacts of potential futures on water, land, and livelihoods; and
- Follow-up multi-stakeholder workshops to revisit scenarios, evaluate trade-offs, and co-create actionable pathways.

**Reach us at:**



[welllabs.comms@ifmr.ac.in](mailto:welllabs.comms@ifmr.ac.in)



<https://welllabs.org>



[@WELL\\_Labs](https://twitter.com/WELL_Labs)



[Water, Environment, Land and Livelihoods \(WELL\) Labs](#)

**Operating office:** WELL Labs, No. 9, First floor, Krishna Road, Basavanagudi, Bengaluru - 560004, Karnataka, India

**Registered office:** Institute for Financial Management and Research, No. 196, TT Krishnamachari Rd, Alwarpet, Chennai - 600018, Tamil Nadu, India