

## Impact of National Honey Mission on Rural Lives

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### Introduction

Beekeeping is an important, sustainable, integral forest, social forest and agricultural supporting activity under the rural development programme in India, since it provides nutritional benefits, economic security & ecological balance, while providing employment. Knowledge of agro climatic conditions, diversified flora, changing agri/horticultural pattern of the crop, no. of species of bees available for farming coupled with management practices play a vital role in transforming the beekeeping entrepreneurship in India.

Until 1953, beekeeping in Indian subcontinent was a disorganized sector which was later taken over by All India Khadi & Village Industries Board and subsequently by the KVIC in 1957 and establishing Central Bee Research & Training Institute at Pune on 1st November, 1962. Because of the common (basic) level of investment and skills, the beekeeping industry offers direct employment to lakhs of rural poor especially hill dwellers, tribal and farmers. Sustainability of this industry is therefore vital to the India's economic wellbeing. KVIC under took **the national honey mission** from august 2016 to January 2018 aimed at bringing together the beekeepers, farmers/growers, researchers, government agencies, agribusiness, conservation groups and manufacturers to improve the beekeeping practices in the country and also to supply necessary tools, disseminate technology & information, create awareness on good beekeeping practices and use as a potential pollinator for higher crop yield.

### Objectives of National Honey Mission

1. To analyse the impact of national honey mission on rural development.
2. To create an end-to-end implementation framework for skill development in beekeeping, which will provides employment opportunities and income generation to agriculturists, beekeepers rural & urban unemployed youth
3. Enforce nationally acceptable standards of Good Beekeeping Practices (GPB) in the country

4. Develop a network of quality master trainers in the field of beekeeping for imparting Good Beekeeping / Apicultural Practices.
5. Offer a passage for overseas market for hive products.
6. Enable pathways from novice beekeepers to viable commercial beekeeping by handholding to credit linkages.
7. Promote convergence and co-ordination between all the stakeholders of beekeeping.
8. Maintain a national database, which will act as a portal for matching the demand and supply in the country. On the other hand, it will also serve as a platform for monitoring the performance of existing beekeepers and their skills, available bee colonies and their production in each state.
9. To tap the local & rural natural resources for generation of income and employment to rural & tribal people in selected pockets.
10. To bring qualitative & quantitative enhancement in honey & hive products for export and domestic market.
11. To promote beekeeping for increasing the crop productivity and pollination services avenue for beekeepers and farmers.

### Results

In 1953 there were as many as 230 beekeepers that maintained around 800 bee colonies in modern bee boxes and were producing 1,200 KGs of honey annually. With the implementation of national honey mission programme it is estimated that with 25 lakh bee colonies, 2.50 lakh beekeepers and wild honey harvest around 56,579 MT of honey in the country, worth Rs 476.04 crores. The natural honey production in the country has increased from 35,000 metric ton in 2005-06 to 1.05 lakh metric ton in 2017-18. The export of natural honey has increased from 16,769 metric ton in 2005-06 to 61,333.90 metric ton (worth Rs 73,218.84 lakhs) in 2018-19, showing an increase of 365.75 per cent. Apart from the natural honey, bee wax worth Rs 46 lakh, pollen worth Rs 56 lakh, royal jelly worth Rs 3.6 crores and bee venom worth Rs 8 lakh is been produced from 1.45 lakh bee colonies.

2016-17		2017-18		2018-19	
Quantity(MT)	Rupees(lakhs)	Quantity(MT)	Rupees(lakhs)	Quantity(MT)	Rupees(lakhs)
45055.45	55779.04	51547.31	65357.61	61333.90	73218.84

Export of natural honey (APEDA, 2019)

Beekeeping industry has opened up a large number of employment opportunities in the country. KVIC has alone provided direct employment to 10,200 individuals and indirect employment to 800 individuals. As per the latest government estimates, introduction of large-scale employment in the beekeeping sector is estimated to generate 3 lakh man-working days by maintaining 10,000 bee colonies. India has potential to keep about 120 million bee colonies that can provide self-employment to over 6 million rural & tribal families. 9170 bee keepers/ bee keeping and honey societies/firms/companies, etc. with 14.70 lakh have been registered as on 31<sup>st</sup> march 2019. This has opened up many new opportunities for the rural poor. Integration of beekeeping with agriculture is acting as an additional source of income for the farmers. According to experts integrating beekeeping with agriculture will increase the pollination, resulting in higher yield 15 to 3400 times more than agricultural alone.

<b>Oil Seeds</b>	<b>% Increase in Yield</b>	<b>Legumes/Pulses</b>	<b>% Increase in Yield</b>
Mustard	128.1 to 159.8	Alfalfa	23.4 to 19,733.3
Rai	18.4	Berseem and other clover	23.4 to 33,150
Rapeseed	12.8 to 139.3	Vetches	39 to 20,000
Torai	66 to 220	Broad beans	6.8 to 90.1
Sarson	222	Dwarf beans	2.8 to 20.7
Safflower	4.2 to 114.3	Kidney beans	500 to 600
Linseed	1.7 to 40	Runner beans	20.6 to 1,100
Sunflower	20 to 3,400	Arahar	21 to 30
<b>Orchard Crop</b>	<b>% Increase In Yield</b>	<b>Vegetables For Seed/Fruits</b>	<b>% Increase In Yield</b>
Apple varieties	180 to 6,950	Radish	22 to 100
Pears	240 to 6,014	Cabbage	100 to 300
Plums	6.7 to 2,739	Turnip	100 to 125
Cherry	56.1 to 1,000	Carrot	9.1 to 135.4
Straw-berry	17.4 to 91.9	Onion	353.5 to 9,878
Raspberry	291.3 to 462.5	Brinjal	35 to 36
Persimmon	20.8	Cucumber	2.1 to 411
Litchi	4,538 to 10,246	This boom in yield is in addition to the value of honey and other products. Bee pollination also improves the quality of seeds/fruits.	
Grapes	756.4 to 6,700		
Guava	70 to 140		

Increase in production of agricultural crops (Bee world 31<sup>st</sup> issue)

## Discussion

Implementation of national honey mission has made a huge impact on rural economy of the country. A lot of beekeepers have entered into this field. Beekeeping industry is now acting as a source of sustainable income for many small farmers. This industry does not require much investment and skill. Lack of technical knowledge is major reason that hinders the growth of beekeeping in the country especially in the rural areas. KVIC has undertaken many training and technical programs to help the people know more about the modern beekeeping methods. But these programs are not reaching their target. In 2017-18 the program actually aimed at training 14,300 but only succeed in training 12,100. So to overcome this better awareness campaign should be carried out.

High production is not merely enough for rural development. There should be proper markets for the products. For that all the local producers should be brought under a common umbrella so as ensure a steady and continuous market. The local producers could join together to form a marketing co-operative for this purpose. The farmer should shift their focus from just natural honey to other bee products such as bee wax, pollen, bee venom, royal jelly as these products have a huge global market. Even though the apiary business industries have grown in India, only 1.45 lakh bee colonies out of 2.5 lakh colonies is utilized to produce hive products.

The main hurdle for the progress of beekeeping industry in India is deforestation and neonicotinoids. The depletion of bee forage in the forests has resulted in the decrease of number of bee colonies and lowering honey production. Trees or large shrubs have to be planted to provide shelter to the bees. Indiscriminate use of insecticides on crops kills bees. Honey bees are also affected by a wide variety of diseases that can even kill the whole colony.

## Conclusion

Introduction of modern beekeeping has proved to be a powerful tool for rural development, serving as source of continuous and sustained income for many rural poor and tribals. The implementation of honey mission has opened new opportunities, increased the production of natural honey and hives products, and helped in improving the quality of honey to meet the international standards and also to raise the export levels. Many new enterprises/ firms/ societies etc. has been initiated contributing immensely towards the rural economy. Over the years bee keeping has developed from a traditional industry to a modern apiculture.