

# BEEKEEPING DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE UNDER EAC-PM RELEASES ITS REPORT

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EAC-PM

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The Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister set up a Beekeeping Development Committee under the Chairmanship of Professor Bibek Debroy. The Beekeeping Development Committee (BDC) has released its report today. BDC was constituted with the objective of identifying ways of advancing beekeeping in India, that can help in improving agricultural productivity, enhancing employment generation, augmenting nutritional security and sustaining biodiversity. Further, beekeeping can be an important contributor in achieving the 2022 target of doubling farmer incomes.

As per Food and Agricultural Organization database, in 2017-18, India ranked eighth in the world in terms of honey production (64.9 thousand tonnes) while China stood first with a production level of 551 thousand tonnes. The report mentions that beekeeping cannot be restricted to honey and wax only, products such as pollen, propolis, royal jelly and bee venom are also marketable and can greatly help Indian farmers. Based on the area under cultivation in India and bee forage crops, India has a potential of about 200 million bee colonies as against 3.4 million bee colonies today. Increasing the number of bee colonies will not only increase the production of bee-related products but will boost overall agricultural and horticultural productivity.

India's recent efforts to improve the state of beekeeping have helped increase the volume of honey exports from 29.6 to 51.5 thousand tonnes between 2014-15 and 2017-18 (as per data from National Bee Board and Ministry of Agriculture & Farmers' Welfare). However, challenges persist and a lot more can be done to enhance the scope and scale of beekeeping. Some of the recommendations in the report include,

- Recognizing honeybees as inputs to agriculture and considering landless Beekeepers as farmers.
- Plantation of bee friendly flora at appropriate places and engaging women self-help groups in managing such plantations.
- Institutionalizing the National Bee Board and rechristening it as the Honey and Pollinators Board of India under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare. Such a body would engage in advancing beekeeping through multiple mechanisms such as setting up of new Integrated Bee Development Centres, strengthening the existing ones, creating a honey price stabilization fund and collection of data on important aspects of apiculture.
- Recognition of apiculture as a subject for advanced research under the aegis of Indian Council for Agricultural Research.
- Training and development of beekeepers by state governments.
- Development of national and regional infrastructure for storage, processing and

marketing of honey and other bee products.

- Simplifying procedures and specifying clear standards for ease of exporting honey and other bee products.

The BDC's report has been submitted to the Prime Minister and has also been placed in the public domain.

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