

Beekeeping as a Contribution to Improved Rural Livelihoods



Farooq Ahmad

Beekeeping, a source of inspiration for the poorest of poor

We have discussed how beekeeping contributes in a balanced way to rural development efforts, leading to secure and sustainable livelihoods. This supplementary model of development consists of five major elements: physical security, economic security, empowerment, social security, and conservation of resources. These elements are intricately linked and interdependent, which means they are all essential in order to achieve secure and sustainable livelihoods.

The major gains from beekeeping development efforts originate from agricultural husbandry, replenishment of forest resources, and human satisfaction – bringing economic benefits to people, particularly to the poorest of the poor. Below we suggest a few approaches that should be incorporated in future rural development strategies for achieving the goal of sustainable livelihoods.

- Sustainable policies to regulate the import and export of bees and bee products and control the spread of diseases between continents, countries, and within bee species
- Improvement in trade policies to remove trade barriers and facilitate cross-border and cross-continent trade of bee products and enhance the understanding of the value chain at all levels
- Harmonisation and adoption of international honey quality standards
- Incorporating managed pollination through honeybees as an important input in agricultural husbandry, to be strictly followed by the government departments concerned
- Improvements in training curricula to include conservation apiculture as an important element of beekeeping development; this change will provide space and opportunity to understand the holistic honeybee phenomenon, which includes all bee species including *Apis mellifera*
- Enhancement of nectar and pollen producing plant species in reforestation and urban beautification projects for the promotion of beekeeping.
- Encouraging the beverages and bottling industry to promote honey-based drinks for people's well-being.
- Development of a database on the nesting habitats of wild honeybee species for the promotion of green businesses like bee watch ecotourism
- Awareness-raising campaigns for conserving wild honeybee habitats through public and private partnership.