

Social Security

The definition of social security depends on the level of social and economic development of communities and nations. In the developed world, pension schemes, health care, and insurance policies give people a sense of security. In developing countries, social security has a different meaning for different people and communities. In most cases the rural poor rely on livestock, a piece of land, or their beehives or bee colonies in the nearby forest to provide them with a sense of social and economic security, as cash flow is not reliable and often inaccessible. In these situations, beekeeping development is also integrated into rural development efforts.

In southern China, special efforts are being made to conserve local and indigenous honeybee species. A comprehensive conservation and development programme for *Apis cerana* has been initiated, which is facilitating the conservation of 780,000 colonies of *Apis cerana* in Yunnan province alone. Ethnic and other communities keep these honeybees in log, wall, and moveable frame hives. As a result of regular selection and breeding programmes, the bee species in this area produces an average annual yield of 10 to 15 kg of honey, 1 to 2 kg of pollen, and 1 kg of wax per colony. In the best case scenario, honey production of *Apis cerana cerana* can reach 90 kg per colony (Kuang et al. 2002). This example shows clearly how beekeeping development using indigenous resources can contribute to social, economic, and environmental security.