

BEEKEEPING (APICULTURE) AND IT'S ECONOMIC IMPORTANCE

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With proper training and advice, any business in agriculture (crop cultivation, animal husbandry, fish farming) is sure to make good profits. In that way, we will see about beekeeping for those who want to be self-employed or part-time farming. It is said that beekeeping makes agriculture prosperous and profitable. Like a beehive for the home, a lifeline for the family. In addition, bees are revered by agronomists as the angels who support ploughing because pollination improves pollination, fertility, fruit production, fruit quality, seed production, seed quality, and yield. Beekeeping is an important component of integrated farming. Its unique feature is that it does not require separate accommodation for beekeeping. Ingredients such as honey, pollen, beeswax, and royal jelly available from beekeeping lead to additional income and rural employment.

Species of bees

- There are four species of bees found in India.
- They are the giant rock bee called *Apis dorseta*, the small bees called *Apis florea*, the domesticated bees called *Apis indica*, and the small mosquito bees called *Melipona indecisa*.
- There are three types of bees: **Queen** bee, **work** bee and **male** bee. Over **90%** of them are found by **working bees**, one queen bee and a few hundred male bees.
- Usually, 20000 - 30000 bees are found in a bee family.

Lifespan of bees

The queen bee: The queen bee can live up to about two years. This is because bees provide and maintain a kind of protein-rich food called royal jelly at work.

This Royal Jelly Queen bee can live for 2-3 years and lay about 1000 eggs a day continuously.

Workers Bees: Its lifespan is 2-3 months.

By this work, the bees themselves do all sorts of work precisely, from collecting nectar to turning it into honey and maintaining the queen and the hive.

Male bees: Their lifespan is 6 - 8 weeks. Its main function is to mate with the queen bee and fertilize the queen bee.

Rearing methods

Beekeeping is carried out in two ways.

- 1) Stable beekeeping
- 2) Transplantation beekeeping

1) Stable beekeeping

Stable beekeeping is the practice of keeping hives in one place on agricultural lands. This time the integrated farm is ideal for beekeeping. This is because of the variety of crops (trees, plants, vines) that provide food for the bees throughout the year. So there is no need to relocate beehives. This method can be used for up to 10-15 beehives per acre.

2) Transplantation beekeeping

- In this method, the beehives are moved to the place where the flowers are, and the beekeeping is done.
- This method is suitable for landless and self-employed start-ups.
- This is because those who do not have land to cultivate flowers can keep beehives only on farmlands with the permission of the farmers.
- Good profit can be obtained by keeping and maintaining up to 50-100 hives in this method.
- Also, different types of bees are available as beekeeping is done among different crops.
- For example, neem honey is the name given to the tea collected by bees that grow near the neem tree.

Important Note: In this method, the hives should be relocated only at night.

Location selection

- Choose a place with shade.
- All four sides need to be well lit.
- Around 2 km around the hive should be covered with trees, plants and vines. Only then will the bees get food throughout the year.
- Choose the colour of the nest of spiders near the box. Only then can bees avoid being trapped in spider webs and dying.
- And there should be no ants near the box.
- It should not be too stagnant.
- In particular, choose a place where chemical pesticides are not overused, as chemicals can affect the mental state of the bees and cause them to die.

Maintenance

- Depending on the size of the bowl in the middle of the tank, water and a little oil may be added to prevent the ants from entering the hive.
- By removing small twigs near the box, bees can avoid getting trapped in spider webs.
- Also, the beehive is located east of the beehive so that the bees' natural enemies can be avoided.
- If the bee family is weakened, a little water mixed with water can be placed near the box to encourage colonization.
- Avoid spraying perfume when approaching the beehive.
- Proper handling of bees and beehives is required.

Conclusion

An Indian beehive can yield about 5-7 kg of honey per year in standard beekeeping and up to 10-15 kg in transplanting beekeeping. By the way, beekeeping is sure to get extra income. Further information can be obtained from the nearest Agricultural Extension Center or by contacting experienced beekeepers. It is unfortunate that so many special bees are on the endangered species list.

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