“Sweet Revolution” as a part of Atmanirbhar Bharat Abhiyan

Government is promoting Beekeeping as part of its aim to double farmers’ income.

The Government has allocated Rs.500 crore towards Beekeeping under the Atma Nirbhar Abhiyan.

India is among the world’s top five honey producers. Compared to 2005-06 honey production has risen by 242% and exports shot by 265%.

Beekeeping will be an important factor in achieving the goal of doubling farmers’ income by 2024.

National Bee Board has created four modules to impart training as part of the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) and 30 lakh farmers have been trained in beekeeping. They are also being financially supported by the Government.

The Minister said the Government is implementing the recommendations of the Committee (Bibek Debroy) to promote beekeeping.

Government has launched ‘Honey Mission’ as part of ‘Sweet Revolution’ which has four components. Even small and marginal farmers can adopt beekeeping since investment is low and returns high.

Issues before beekeepers

1. promotion of scientific beekeeping,
2. quality assurance,
3. minimum support price,
4. transport of bee colonies,
5. processing, packaging, branding, testing, organic certification of honey and different beehive products were discussed.

Successful beekeepers and entrepreneurs from Kashmir, West Bengal, Uttarakhand, Bihar, Kerala, Tamil Nadu, Karnataka, Uttar Pradesh, Jharkhand and Madhya Pradesh shared their experiences and suggested ways forward to bring about the Sweet Revolution.

Beekeeping Development Committee

Bibek Debroy led beekeeping development committee under the Economic Advisory Council to the Prime Minister has made recommendations to enhance the contribution of the beekeeping sector for achieving the target of doubling of farmer incomes by 2022.

The committee was set up to identify ways of advancing beekeeping in India that can help in improving:

- Agricultural productivity.
• Enhancing employment generation.
• Augmenting nutritional security.
• Sustaining biodiversity.

Key Recommendations

• Institutionalize the National Bee Board and rename it as the Honey and Pollinators Board of India under the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers’ Welfare as it will help in advancing beekeeping through multiple mechanisms such as:
• Setting up of new integrated bee development centers and strengthening the existing ones.
• Creating a honey price stabilization fund.
• Collection of data on important aspects of apiculture.
• Simplifying procedures and specify clear standards for ease of exporting honey and other bee products.
• Beekeeping should not be restricted to honey and wax only instead marketing of bee products such as pollen, propolis, royal jelly, and bee venom can contribute to the income of Indian farmers.
• Recognize honeybees as inputs to agriculture and consider landless beekeepers as farmers.
• Training and development of beekeepers should be provided by state governments.
• National and regional infrastructure should be developed for storage, processing, and marketing of honey and other bee products.
• Plantation of bee-friendly flora at appropriate places and engaging women self-help groups in managing such plantations.
• Recognition of apiculture as a subject for advanced research under the aegis of Indian Council for Agricultural Research.

Honey Bee Industry in India

• As per the Food and Agricultural Organization database, Indian ranked eighth in 2017-18 in the world in terms of honey production while China stood first.
• 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.

National Bee Board (NBB)

• Small Farmers’ Agri-Business Consortium (SFAC) registered National Bee Board as a society under the societies registration Act, 1860 in 2000.
• National Bee Board (NBB) was reconstituted (with the secretary as chairman) in June 2006.
• The main objective of the National Bee Board (NBB) is the overall development of beekeeping by promoting scientific beekeeping in India to increase the productivity of crops through pollination and increase the honey production for increasing the income of the Beekeepers/ Farmers.
• Presently NBB is implementing National horticulture mission (NHM) and Horticulture Mission for North East and Himalayan State (HMNEM).