

Beekeeping: A Profitable Venture for Enhancing Farmer's Income in Meghalaya

Sandip Patra, D. M. Firake, G. T. Behere and S. Hazarika

ICAR Research Complex for NEH Region,
Umiam, Meghalaya-793103
E-mail: sandipatra47@gmail.com

Abstract—Beekeeping is an art and science of rearing and management of bees in a box called 'bee hive' for production of honey and other by-products like bee wax, propolis, bee venom etc. It is considered as a non-land based income generating tiny industrial sector. It is an important agri-business that not only promises good returns to the farmers but also helps increase agricultural productivity. It is also a vital component for integrated rural development and off-farm employment generation for sustainable livelihoods. Moreover, bees are the most effective pollinators of crops and natural flora and are reported to pollinate over 70 percent of the world's cultivated crops. Meghalaya is a mega biodiversity hotspot, harbor enormous number of flowering plants to continue supply of food for the bees. The farmers keep their beehives in the forest area where no agrochemicals are used. The study was conducted under Tribal Sub-Plan (TSP) to assess the benefits of beekeeping for enhancing farmer's income in Meghalaya. It is also assumed that Meghalaya's honey is one of the best in the country due to the multifloral sources. The diversified forest of this region is full of undomesticated colonies of native honey bees which is relatively resistance to diseases and well adopted with the climate of northeast India. Thus, exploration of beekeeping may play a vital role to enhance farmer's income and sustainable livelihood improvement.

Keywords: Beekeeping, profitable venture, livelihood improvement, Meghalaya.