

The Minister of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare recently inaugurated the Honey Farmer Producer Organisation (FPO) Programme of the National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Limited (NAFED), with the virtual event making headlines. A Producer Organisation (PO) is a legal construct comprised of primary producers such as farmers, milk producers, rural artisans, and more. Specifically, an FPO is a type of PO where farmers are the members.

### **Introduction to the Honey FPO Programme and its Implementation**

The Honey FPO Programme was launched under the Formation and Promotion of FPOs. This scheme aims to promote the establishment of 10,000 new FPOs, providing them with funding from the National Level Project Management Advisory and Fund Sanctioning Committee (N-PMAFSC).

Initially, three implementing agencies were in charge of forming and promoting FPOs – Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium (SFAC), National Cooperative Development Corporation (NCDC), and National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development (NABARD). Recently, NAFED has been appointed as the fourth national implementing agency. States also have the option to nominate their implementing agency in collaboration with the Department of Agriculture, Cooperation and Farmers' Welfare (DAC&FW).

### **The Role of Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs)**

The formation and promotion of FPOs will be executed by specialist Cluster Based Business Organizations (CBBOs) engaged by said implementing agencies. NAFED, with the assistance of CBBOs and the Indian Society of Agribusiness Professionals (ISAP), has kicked off the promotion of FPOs for beekeepers and honey collectors across five states in India.

### **The First Registered Honey FPO**

The very first registered Honey FPO, under the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM), is situated in Madhya Pradesh. This marks a significant milestone in the modernization of Indian beekeeping.

### **Potential Benefits and Improvements from Honey FPO Programme**

The Honey FPO Program is likely to bring about a series of improvements, including skill upgradation in scientific beekeeping, providing state-of-the-art infrastructure for processing honey and other beekeeping products, and boosting quality control measures. Additionally, improved logistics and supply chain management will enhance collection, storage, bottling, and marketing centers for honey produce.

### **Government's Efforts towards Beekeeping Promotion**

The government is ardently promoting beekeeping as a means to double farmers' income and uplift tribal communities. An allocation of INR 500 crore has been made towards beekeeping under the Atmanirbhar Abhiyan. Efforts also include 'Apiary on Wheels', an innovative concept by the Khadi and Village Industries Commission (KVIC) that makes the upkeep and migration of bee colonies easier.

### **About National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd**

National Agricultural Cooperative Marketing Federation of India Ltd. was founded on October 2nd, 1958 and is registered under the Multi-State Co-operative Societies Act, 2002. Its primary objective is to promote and develop marketing, processing, and storage of agricultural, horticultural, and forest produce. NAFED is now one of the largest procurement as well as marketing agencies for agricultural products in India.

### **About National Bee Board**

The Small Farmers Agri-business Consortium registered the National Bee Board as a society under the Societies Registration Act, 1860 in 2000, and it was reconstituted in June 2006. The main objective is the overall development of beekeeping by promoting scientific beekeeping in India to increase the productivity of crops through pollination and to boost the income of the beekeepers/farmers.