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# Beekeeping: A Scientific Approach to Biodiversity Conservation and Pollinator Protection

**Nabdeep Singh, R.S Negi, Santosh Singh, Eshwar Negi, Ankit Sati & Kiran Kothiyal**
Department of Rural Technology, H.N.B Garhwal University (A Central University) Srinagar, Uttarakhand, India

Correspondence Author: **Nabdeep Singh**

**Abstract:** Bees are crucial pollinators in natural and agricultural environments, essential for maintaining plant diversity and health. Pollinators especially bees are vital for the reproduction of most flowering plants and crop production. This review explores the synergistic potential of combining beekeeping, scientific research, and biodiversity conservation efforts. It emphasizes the importance of leveraging beekeepers' knowledge in research to enhance our understanding of pollination, pollinators, and pollinator ecosystems to develop effective conservation strategies. The study advocates for a balanced approach that manages domesticated and wild bee populations, preserves natural habitats, and promotes bee-friendly agricultural practices. Key recommendations include developing standardized beekeeping protocols, exploring the long-term impacts of apiculture practices on native bee populations, and strengthening collaboration among stakeholders such as beekeepers, farmers, scientists, and policymakers. The integrated insights from various disciplines, including apiculture, ecology, agricultural science, and environmental policy, to develop a holistic understanding of the subject. The review also highlights the importance of implementing community engagement and awareness initiatives to foster stewardship of pollinator ecosystems and adopting Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management (IPPM) strategies to balance pest control with pollinator conservation. The methodology began with thoroughly examining peer-reviewed articles, scientific reports, and relevant publications to gather information on beekeeping practices, pollinator ecosystems, and conservation strategies. Furthermore, it emphasizes embracing a scientific approach to beekeeping that prioritizes bee health and contributes to habitat conservation. The review concludes that aligning beekeeping with scientific understanding and conservation efforts is crucial for supporting pollinator health, enhancing biodiversity, and creating more sustainable agricultural systems and resilient ecosystems.

**Keywords:** Beekeeping, Biodiversity, Pollination, Pollinators

## Introduction

Bees play a crucial role as pollinators in both natural and agricultural environments, as their activities are essential for maintaining the health and diversity of plant communities (**Sidhu & Joshi,2016**). However, declining numbers of pollinators, including bees, bring a severe risk to the security of food and the overall health of natural ecosystems.(**Paudel et al.,2015**). Beekeeping has long been acknowledged for its economic importance in honey production, but its role in biodiversity conservation has gained increasing scientific attention. **(Kassa Degu & Regasa Megerssa,2020).**As global biodiversity faces exceptional dangers, the potential of beekeeping to contribute to conservation efforts has become a subject of keen interest among researchers and policymakers alike (**Drossart & Gérard, 2020**). Agricultural production plays a crucial role in sustainability, as both the quality and quantity of crops directly impact global food security(**Hinton, 2021**) **Hinton, 2021**. Increasing plant density and diversity can significantly boost crop yields, with smallholder farmers experiencing an average increase of 24% globally **(Potts et al., 2016).** This approach not only enhances agricultural productivity but also promotes biodiversity and yields positive social outcomes **(Breeze, 2011, Qaiser et al., 2013).** Beekeeping products are used in food and pharmacy and have economic benefits **(Waykar & Alqadhi, 2016).** The main products derived from beekeeping include honey, beeswax, pollen, propolis, royal jelly, and bee venom **(Merdan, 2021).** Each of these products has distinct uses and benefits, contributing to the economic viability of beekeeping (**Waykar & Alqadhi, 2016**). Indian beekeeping primarily revolves around two domesticated species, Apis mellifera and the Indian hive bee, *Apis cerana indica*, alongside two wild species, the rock bee (*Apis dorsata*) and the dwarf honey bee (*Apis florea*), as highlighted by (**Kishan Tej et al.,2017**). As a traditional industry, the adoption of modern technology is slow, and the use of standardized equipment is virtually nonexistent(**Mulatu et al., 2021).**This sector is marked by minimal colony holdings, moderate labor intensity and low productivity, with a narrow focus on honey production, neglecting diversification and pollination services **(Chaudhary, 2007, 2014).**

Pollinators, such as bees, flies, beetles, butterflies, and other animals, play a crucial role in the reproduction of approximately 80% of all blooming plants **(Wojcik, 2021).** Among these vital pollinators, bees stand out for their efficiency and diversity **(Ollerton et al., 2011)** and without pollination, 5–8% of the world's crops would fail to produce **(Potts et al., 2016).**The public has been increasingly concerned about pollinator decline in recent years, and policies have been developed accordingly **(Dicks et al.,2021**;**Colla & MacIvor, 2017; Hall & Steiner, 2019; Neumann & Carreck, 2010; Underwood et al., 2017**). Global research indicates a worrying decline in wild pollinator species and the essential pollination services they provide. This decline is driven by a combination of threats, including pesticide use, habitat loss and fragmentation, disease, competition with nonnative and managed species, and the impacts of climate change(**Schatzet al., 2021; Biesmeijer et al., 2006; Burkle et al., 2013; Cameron et al., 2011; Cameron & Sadd, 2020; Kerr et al., 2015; Koh et al., 2016; Potts et al., 2010; Powney et al., 2019).**

Ecosystem services play a crucial role in enhancing well-being and provide irreplaceable benefits that are essential for human life **(Vasiljevic& Gavrilovic, 2019).** Diverse floral resource plantings, for example, can support bee communities(**Vaudo et al., 2015; Heller et al., 2019).**Beekeeping can enhance the resilience of rural livelihoods by diversifying income streams and providing a buffer against agricultural risks and shocks (**Hinton et al., 2019**).

In 2016, the International Platform for Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services and the International Union for Conservation of Nature issued a stark warning regarding the impact of systemic insecticides on pollinator populations, highlighting a troubling global decline **(Van der Sluijs, 2020).**To boost agricultural productivity, several governments are providing financial support for beekeeping initiatives(**Schouten, 2020).**In certain countries, honeybee pollination services are offered through market-based systems, with research focusing on optimizing hive efficiency and its impact on pollination effectiveness **(Jones Ritten et al., 2018).**

The current state of biodiversity, particularly concerning pollinators, is indeed alarming. Declining insect populations, especially bees,(**Jactel et al.,2020**)threaten not only ecosystem health but also global food security **(Sánchez-Bayo & Wyckhuys, 2019).** This crisis underscores the urgent need for innovative conservation strategies that can be integrated into human activities and leverage public participation (**Potts et al., 2016;Maderson, 2023).**

The decline in pollinator populations is multifaceted, among the main causes are disease, pesticide use, habitat loss and climate change **(Goulson et al., 2015;Bero, 2017**). Recent studies have shown that biomass of insects has declined by more than 75% over 27 years in locations that are protected highlighting the severity of the situation **(Hallmann et al., 2017).** This decline has significant implications for ecosystem functioning and agricultural productivity, as approximately 75% of global crops depend on animal pollination to some degree **(Klein et al., 2007).**While honey production remains a valuable aspect of beekeeping, a scientific approach can elevate this practice into a powerful tool for ecosystem health(**Fedoriak et al.,2021**). By understanding the vital role bees play in ecosystem services, particularly pollination that underpins food security and plant diversity, beekeepers can prioritize natural methods(**Richardson, 2023;Garibaldi et al., 2013).** This includes fostering native bee populations alongside managed honeybees, recognizing that wild pollinators often provide more effective and stable pollination services **(Iwasaki & Hogendoorn, 2021; Garibaldi et al., 2011;Bradbear, 2009).**The interrelationship between managed honeybees and wild pollinators is complex(**Narjes et al.,2019).** While there are concerns about competition and pathogen spillover **(Mallinger et al., 2017),** there's also potential for positive interactions. Beekeeping practices that minimize harm to native bees and even provide them with habitat can create a win-win situation **(Henry & Rodet, 2018; Sponsler & Johnson, 2015)**. For instance, maintaining diverse floral resources for honeybees can also benefit wild pollinators, enhancing overall ecosystem health**(Parreño et al., 2022; Nicholls & Altieri, 2013).**The research methodology involved a comprehensive literature review of peer-reviewed articles, reports, and policy documents related to beekeeping, Biodiversity Conservation and Pollinator Protection. The objective of this review paper is to compile existing facts about the pollination, pollinators, Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management, economic benefits, challenges and conservation and management's strategies of beekeeping.

**1. Pollination and Pollinators**

Pollination involves transferring pollen from the flower's anther to the stigma, facilitating fertilization and seed production **(Bhatla & Lal, 2023)**. Pollination is an important pre-requisite for the process of fertilization **(Shivanna,2016)** and the development of seed or fruit in agricultural or horticultural crops **(Lord and Russell, 2002).**It is an essential part of plant reproduction and plays a crucial role in maintaining healthy ecosystem**(Sekercioglu, 2010)**. Pollination can be broadly classified into two types: self-pollination, where a flower fertilizes itself, and cross-pollination, where pollen is transferred between different flowers. Pollination can be carried out by both biotic (living) and abiotic (non-living) agents. Biotic pollination is mainly done by animals such as insects, birds, and bats, while abiotic pollination relies on wind and water**(Walker, 2020; Torezan-Silingardi,2021).** Over 2,00,000 species of pollinators are animals, wherein around 75% of crop plant pollination is contributed by insects **(Aizen et al., 2009)**, Coleoptera (beetles), Diptera (true flies), Lepidoptera (butterflies and moths), and Hymenoptera (bees, wasps, and ants) are important insect orders that pollinate thousands of crop species worldwide **(Ollerton et al., 2011).** Bees are the most important pollinators; responsible for one out of every three bites of food we eat**(Reckhaus, 2019).**

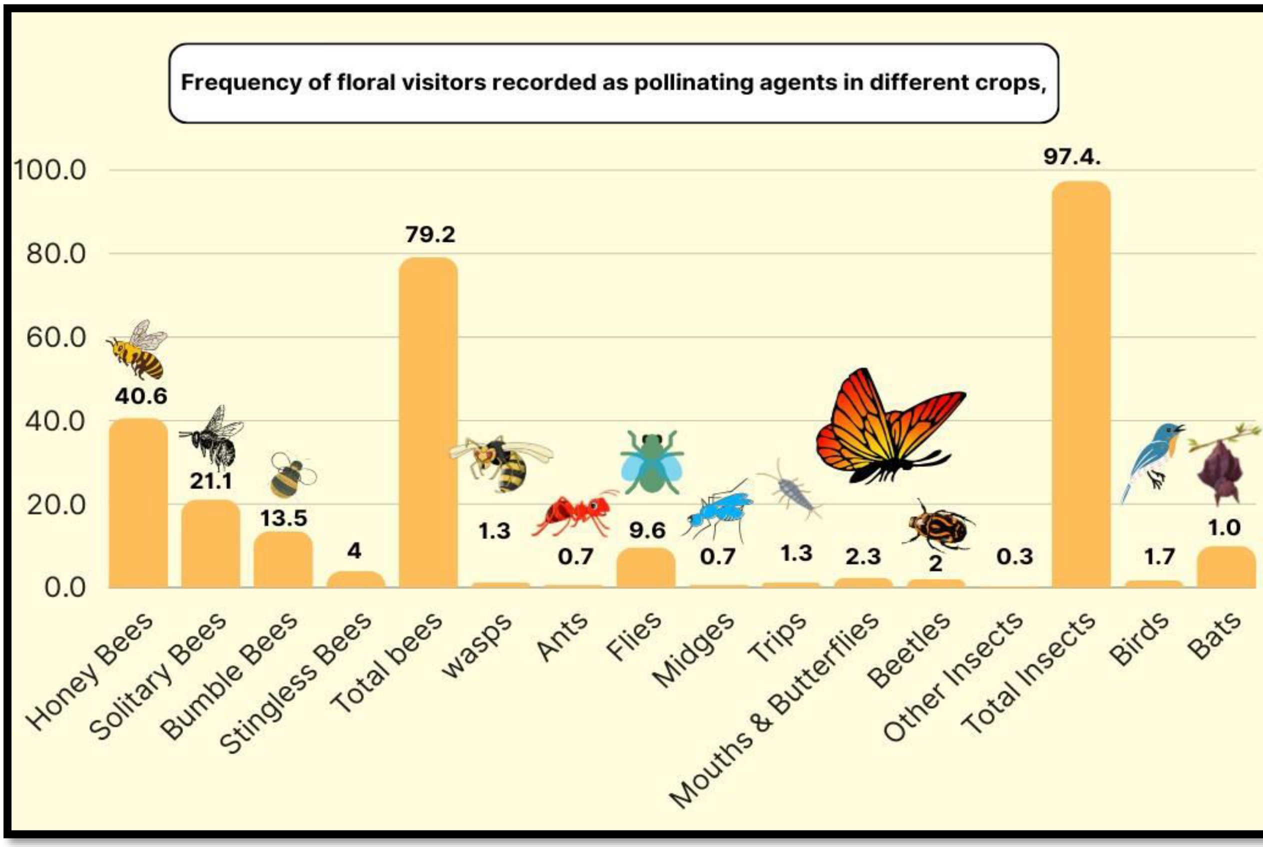
**Table 1: Bee pollination affecting the yield growth percentage different crops**

| Sl.No. | Crops | Scientificname | Increase inyield (%) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Oilseeds** | | | |
| 1. | Linseed | *LinumusitatissimumL.* | 22 to 38 |
| 2. | Mustard | *Brassica*spp. | 43 |
| 3. | Niger | *Guizotiaabyssinica Cass.* | 199 |
| 4. | Safflower | *CarthamustinctoriusL.* | 23 to 28 |
| 5. | Sesame | *Sesamumindicum L.* | 32 |
| 6. | Sunflower | *HelianthusannuusL.* | 32 to 48 |
| **Fibre** | | | |
| 7. | Cotton | *Gossypiumspp.* | 17 to 19 |
| **Fodder** | | | |
| 8. | Berseem | *TrifoliumalexandrinumL.* | 3497 |
| 9. | Lucerne | *MedicagosativaL.* | 112 |
| **Vegetables** | | | |
| 10. | Cucumber | *Cucumis sativusL.* | 66 |
| 11. | Onion | *AlliumcepaL.* | 93 |
| 12. | Tomato | *Solanum lycopersicum* | 160 |
| 13. | Radish | *RaphanussativusL.* | 700 |
| 14. | Watermelon | *Citrullusvulgaris* Schrad | 52 |
| **Fruits** | | | |
| 15. | Apple | *Pyrusmalus L.* | 44 |
| 16. | Grape | *VitisviniferaL.* | 37 |
| 17. | Lime | *Citrus*spp. | 1533 |
| 18. | Litchi | *Nepheliumlitchi*Camb. | 150 to 170 |
| 19. | Plums | *Prunus sp.* | 15 |
| **Condimentsand Spices** | | | |
| 20. | Cardamom | *ElettariacardamomMaton* | 21 to 37 |
| 21. | Coriander | *Coriandrumsativum corniculataL.* | 30 |
| 22. | Kasuri methi | *TrigonellaL.* | 80 |
| 23. | Saunf | *Foeniculumvulgare Miller* | 81 |
| **Plantation** | | | |
| 24. | Coffee | *Coffee arabicaL.* | 83 |

***Source:** CBRTI, KVIC*

They gather pollen to provide their young with a supply of protein, making them excellent pollinators (**Hicks et al., 2016**)and their hairy bodies attract pollen grains(**Jones & Jones, 2001;Lawrence, 2015).**Other important pollinators include beetles, butterflies, flies, and hummingbirds(**Buchmann & Nabhan, 2012**). Pollinators are the agents,transfer pollen from male to female flowers of the same plant or different plant for pollination (**Sukumaran et al., 2020).**Pollination of fruits, vegetables, (**Garratt et al., 2014**)and other crops often depends on honeybees and wild bees and their conservation is equally important(**Abrol et al., 2012).**There would be almost a 3–8% global decline in agricultural production in the absence of pollinators (**Aizen et al., 2009**). In addition to monetary benefits, pollinators also have an important role to play in aesthetic, religious, cultural, and recreational activities(**Chagnon et al.,2015).** It is crucial to provide a diverse array of native plants with overlapping bloom periods throughout the growing season. Maintaining pesticide-free habitats with ample nesting resources is also essential for the survival and prosperity of bee communities(**Britt, 2020).**The interactions between plants and their pollinators are crucial to ecological balance, playing a key role in sustaining biodiversity and ecosystem health **(Vázquez et al., 2012; González,2010**), without pollinators, many plants could not reproduce and set seeds (**Albrecht 2012**), plants provides pollen, nectar and other rewards to pollinators (**Zarimanet et al.,2022; Nicholls & Hempel de Ibarra, 2017).**Human dependence on animal-pollinated crops underscores the crucial role of pollinators, as they enhance fruit and seed production in 75% of the world's major food crops(**Klein et al., 2007**). This contribution is valued at €153 billion annually, accounting for 9.5% of global agricultural output (**Gallai et al.,2009).** The intricate relationship between bees, beekeeping practices, and biodiversity represents a complex ecological nexus crucial for ecosystem health and sustainability (**Nath et al., 2023). ** Honeybees and diverse native species play a key role in providing essential ecosystem services, primarily through pollination (**Goulson & Sparrow, 2009; Potts et al., 2010**). This service not only supports agricultural productivity but also supports the diversity and resilience of natural plant communities (**Garibaldi et al., 2013).**Natural beekeeping methods, which prioritize bee health and minimize human intervention, have emerged as a potential strategy to enhance biodiversity (**Conrad, 2013; Seeley, 2019**). These practices often involve using native bee species, maintaining diverse floral resources, and avoiding chemical inputs**, (Belsky & Joshi, 2019**) which can have cascading positive effects on local ecosystems (**Nicholls & Altieri, 2013).**However, the interrelationship between beekeeping with exotic and native bee populations is complex and sometimes controversial (**Mallinger et al., 2017).** While honeybees can complement the pollination services of native bees (**Brittain et al., 2013**), there are concerns about competition for resources and the potential spread of pathogens **(Goulson& Sparrow,**

**2009; Fürst et al., 2014**). Understanding and managing these interactions is critical for conservation efforts (**Geslin et al., 2017).**




***Data Source: (Chaudhary, 2019)***

## 2. Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management

The concept ofIPPM (Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management) was introduced by (**Biddinger and Rajote, 2015**). Integrated pest and pollinator management is not a hidden fact that honey bees are the major pollinators of fruits and other crops (**Calderone, 2012**). Not only Apis bees, but non-Apis bees like bumble bees, solitary bees, and syrphid flies have substantial contributions to pollination services, thus improving crop yield (**Abrol et al., 2012).** However, farmers in India take meager interest in the sustainability and augmentation of these, Apis and non-Apis pollinators as their major context of concern is reduced pests and enhanced yield. Not even a few farmers understand the significance of pollinators and neglect this concern during pest management programs(**Tarakini et al., 2020**). Many farmers in southern India randomly introduce bee colonies in their plantation crop fields without having complete knowledge of the compatible bee species, which leads to inadequate pollination, competition and displacement of native pollinators, pest and disease infestations, and negative environmental impact **(Tej et al., 2017).** Additionally, chemical control, an important aspect of IPM, has several positive aspects like rapid knockdown effect, easy availability, as well as comparatively inexpensive, when used appropriately **(Nawaz & Ahmad, 2015)**. However, irreversible social, economic, and environmental impacts can be laid by chemical control in the absence of technical expertise **(Castro, 2009)**. Pollinator health is damaged by many approved pesticides**(Johnson & Corn, 2015)** doses used in agriculture which is attributed to systemic failure in the regulation of pesticides **(Baskar et al., 2017).** In addition, habitat loss, nesting site disruption, climate change, pollution, and reduced plant quality contribute substantial threats to pollinator decline in India **(Basu et al., 2011).** Such are the reasons that the pollinator population has considerably declined over the past years **(Bero, 2017)(Potts et al., 2010)**because the safety and survival parameters of the most important insect species pollinators have been lost somewhere in our everyday pest control programs **(FAO, 2016).** It is, thus, needed that these pollinators be managed on an integrated scale to sustain their population and increase their efficiency to sustain our livelihood. The concept of Integrated Pollinator Management resembles Integrated Pest Management (IPM) in using diverse control measures simultaneously **(Lundin et al., 2021),**however, the difference lies in the fact that in Integrated Pollinator Management, enough emphasis is given to using various management practices to protect pollinators and sustain their population along with improvisation of their foraging abilities, fecundity, and rate of pollination. Thus, the two concepts have been merged as Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management (IPPM) to co-manage pests and pollinators on the same scale **(Biddinger and Rajotte, 2015).** The concept of IPPM was initially restricted specifically to practices that reduce pollinators' exposure to conventional pesticides **(Biddinger and Rajotte, 2015).** However, there is a need to incorporate other management tactics of IPM as well. In IPPM, proactive landscape and crop field management are crucial in which reactive human-based inputs such as pesticides can be incorporated **(Egan et al., 2020).**

In Asia, ten distinct species of honeybees are recognized for their potential in pollination across various agro-climatic conditions. These include the rock bee *(*Apis dorsata*),* the Indian bee *(*Apis cerana indica**), the little bee *(*Apis florea*),* the European bee *(*Apis mellifera*),* introduced from Europe for commercial beekeeping, and the dammer bee *(*Trigona irridipennis*),* a stingless species. The list also features the giant bee *(*Apis laboriosa*),* known as the largest bee species found in the high altitudes of the Himalayan range, as well as the red bee (*Apis koschevnikovi*), the tiny *(*Apis andreniformis**), native to Southeast Asia, the Malaysian bee (*Apis nuluensis*), and the black bee *(*Apis nigrocinta**), native to Sulawesi Island and Indonesia.(**Hepburn, & Hepburn, 2011).** Among the various species of honey bees, the key pollinators found across different regions of the country include *Apis mellifera L., Apis cerana F., Apis dorsata F., Apis florea*

*F., and Trigona irridipennis L.* These species are abundant and play a crucial role in pollination (**Deodikar and Suryanarayana,1977; Shelar and Suryanarayana, 1981 and Baswana, 1984).** India is rich in plant diversity, boasting over 6,000 plant species, with more than 600 categorized as bee flora that produce over 70 distinct types of unifloral and bifloral honeys (**Kumar and Chaudhary, 1993).** Additionally, India hosts a wide variety of fauna, including three of the world's four honey bee species. This diverse ecosystem means that plant-pollinator interactions in India can be markedly different from those studied in Western regions, where most pollination research is conducted. Given the quantifiable economic impact of pollinators on crop yields, any decline in their presence could adversely affect both yield and quality(**Free, 1993).**

## 3. Impact of Pesticides and Fertilizers on Pollinators

Pesticides and fertilizers, while essential for modern agriculture, pose significant threats to pollinator health and populations. These chemicals can directly harm pollinators, alter their environment, and contribute to broader ecological issues(**El-Bouhssini & Trissi, 2018).**

Pesticides have been linked to acute and chronic harm to pollinators, including bees and butterflies. These chemicals can kill pollinators directly or impair their defences against illness, leaving them more vulnerable(**van der Sluijs et al., 2013**). Neonicotinoids, a widely used class of insecticides, have been particularly implicated in pollinator decline **(Sanchez-Bayo and Goka, 2014).**

Fertilizers can indirectly impact pollinators by altering floral resources. Excessive nutrient input can lead to changes in plant growth and flower production, reducing their attractiveness to pollinators (**Potts et al., 2010).**Both pesticides and fertilizers can contaminate pollen and nectar sources, essential food for pollinators. Studies have shown widespread pesticide contamination in agricultural landscapes, with multiple pesticide residues often detected in pollen samples **(van der Sluijs et al., 2013).**The combined effects of pesticide and fertilizer use have contributed to a decline in pollinator populations, including Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD), a complex phenomenon defined by the abrupt disappearance of mature bees from a hive **(van Engelsdorp et al., 2009).** While CCD is likely caused by multiple factors, pesticides are considered a contributing factor **(Ellis, 2007).**

## 4. Economic Benefits and Biodiversity

Pollinators significantly enhance the quality of fruits, nuts, oilseeds, and vegetables, thereby boosting the economic value of crop production (**Nagar and Chaudhary, 2006, Klatt et al., 2013, Garratt et al., 2014).**Quantifying the true benefits of animal pollination is challenging due to its complex nature, and it's even more difficult to

measure the qualitative advantages provided by ecosystem services. Pollinators, particularly bees, play a crucial role in both economic prosperity and biodiversity conservation. The economic impact of pollination services is substantial, with insect pollinators contributing to approximately 75% of global crops used directly as human food **(IPBES, 2016)**. The annual global economic value of pollination has been estimated at US$235-577 billion **(Lautenbach et al., 2012)**, underscoring its significance in maintaining food security and agricultural economies worldwide. Beyond crop pollination, the beekeeping industry itself is a significant economic contributor, with the global honey market valued at USD 9.21 billion in 2020 and expected to reach USD 14.16 billion by 2028 **(Grand View Research, 2021).** Beekeeping also serves as a sustainable livelihood option, particularly in rural and developing regions, contributing to poverty alleviation and economic diversification **(Lowore et al., 2018).**
From a biodiversity perspective, pollinators are essential for maintaining plant diversity in natural ecosystems**(Vázquez et al., 2012)**;approximately 90% of naturally occurring flowering plants rely on animal pollination to some degree**(Ollerton et al., 2011).** The economic value of pollination services provides a strong incentive for the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity **(Breeze et al., 2016)**. Bees and other pollinators serve as important bioindicators of ecosystem health, helping to monitor environmental changes and biodiversity loss **(Kevan, 1999)**. Additionally, beekeeping practices can encourage the maintenance of diverse floral resources, indirectly supporting wider biodiversity **(Sponsler et al., 2019).** Beyond bees, other insect pollinators such as flies (particularly hoverflies) are important for both wild plants and crops. Flies are the second most frequent flower visitors after bees and are essential pollinators for many plant species **(Orford et al., 2015)**. Butterflies and moths, while less efficient pollinators than bees, play a crucial role in the pollination of night-blooming plants and act as indicators of ecosystem health **(Winfree et al., 2011).** Beetles, the most diverse order of insects, were among the first pollinators of ancient flowering plants and remain important for magnolias, pawpaws, and spicebush **(Wardhaugh, 2015).**
Vertebrate pollinators, including birds (especially hummingbirds) and bats, are critical for the pollination of many tropical and subtropical plants. Hummingbirds are key pollinators in the Americas, while sunbirds fulfill a similar role in Africa and Asia **(Whelan et al., 2008)**. Bats are essential pollinators for many economically important tropical fruits, such as bananas, mangoes, and guavas **(Kunz et al., 2011).**
From a biodiversity perspective, pollinators are essential for maintaining plant diversity in natural ecosystems, with nearly 90% of wild flowering plants depending to some extent on animal pollination **(Ollerton et al., 2011).** The economic value of pollination services provides a strong incentive for the conservation of natural habitats and biodiversity

(**Breeze et al., 2016**). Pollinators serve as important bioindicators of ecosystem health, helping to monitor environmental changes and biodiversity loss **(Kevan, 1999).**

However, there are challenges in balancing economic gains with biodiversity conservation. The decline of native pollinator species, including non-bee insects and vertebrates, poses risks to both biodiversity and long-term agricultural sustainability **(Goulson et al., 2015; Regan et al., 2015).**Numerous pollinator species' phenology and range are being impacted by climate change, potentially disrupting plant-pollinator interactions **(Hegland et al., 2009).** Habitat loss, pesticide use, and the spread of pathogens threaten pollinator populations globally **(Potts et al., 2010).**

However, there are challenges in balancing economic gains with biodiversity conservation. The decline of native pollinator species poses risks to both biodiversity and long-term agricultural sustainability (**Goulson et al., 2015**). In some regions, introduced honeybees can become invasive, potentially impacting native pollinators and plant-pollinator networks (**Moritz et al., 2005**). The interface between managed and wild bee populations can facilitate the spread of pathogens, threatening both groups (**Manley et al., 2019**). Furthermore, modern farming practices, while economically productive, can reduce habitat availability for pollinators and impact biodiversity (**Dicks et al., 2021).** Therefore, sustainable management practices that consider both economic and ecological factors are crucial for maximizing the benefits of pollination services while preserving biodiversity, requiring a holistic approach involving various stakeholders to develop balanced strategies.

## 5. Community Engagement and Awareness in Pollinator Protection

Community engagement and awareness play crucial roles in pollinator protection and biodiversity conservation. These efforts involve educating the public, fostering local initiatives, and promoting practices that support pollinators and their habitats.Public awareness campaigns have been shown to significantly increase knowledge about pollinators and motivate pro-conservation behaviors (**Lorenz and Stark, 2015**). These campaigns often focus on the importance of pollinators for food security and ecosystem health, helping to create a sense of personal connection and responsibility among community members **(Hall et al., 2017).**Local community gardens and urban greening projects have emerged as effective ways to engage citizens in pollinator conservation. These initiatives not only provide habitat for pollinators but also serve as educational platforms, allowing people to observe and learn about pollinators firsthand **(Matteson et al., 2008).** Such projects have been found to enhance urban biodiversity and contribute to community well-being **(Baldock et al., 2019).**Educational institutions play a vital role in raising awareness about pollinators. Incorporating pollinator education into school curricula has been shown to effectively increase students' knowledge and promote positive attitudes towards conservation **(Schönfelder and Bogner, 2017).** University-led outreach programs also contribute significantly to community education and engagement in pollinator protection (**Domroese and Johnson, 2017).**Beekeepers' associations and local environmental groups often spearhead community-based conservation efforts. These organizations facilitate knowledge sharing, promote best practices in beekeeping and gardening, and advocate for pollinator-friendly policies at local and regional levels **(Durant, 2019).**

The creation of pollinator-friendly habitats in both urban and rural areas is a key aspect of community engagement. Encouraging the planting of native, pollinator-friendly flora in private gardens, public spaces, and agricultural margins helps to create corridors for pollinators and increase overall biodiversity **(Hicks et al., 2016).**Social media and digital platforms have become powerful tools for disseminating information and coordinating conservation efforts. Online communities focused on pollinator protection facilitate the rapid sharing of knowledge, resources, and best practices across geographical boundaries **(van der Sluijs and Vaage, 2016).**

Collaboration between scientists, policymakers, and community members is essential for effective pollinator conservation. Participatory approaches that incorporate local knowledge and concerns into conservation strategies have been shown to lead to more sustainable and widely accepted outcomes **(Reed et al., 2017).**Economic incentives, such as subsidies for pollinator-friendly farming practices or certifications for bee-friendly products, can also engage communities in conservation efforts by aligning environmental goals with economic interests (**Garibaldi et al., 2014).**

Education and public engagement are also key components of this scientific approach to beekeeping. By sharing their knowledge and passion, beekeepers can raise awareness about the importance of pollinators and inspire community action for conservation **(Hall et al., 2017).** This can lead to more pollinator-friendly urban planning, reduced pesticide use in private gardens, and greater support for policies that protect biodiversity **(Lorenz & Stark, 2015).**

## 6. Challenges

The complex challenges facing pollinator well-being are deeply intertwined with our current food production system, which often prioritizes inexpensive food through practices that can be harmful to pollinators **(Ericksen et al., 2009).** This system has led to intensive pesticide use(**Johnson et al., 2010**) directly impacting bee health (**LWEC, 2015**), and widespread habitat loss due to monoculture cultivation, reducing the quality and quantity of forage available to pollinators **(Naug, 2009; Goulson et al., 2015).**

Diseases, particularly varroasis, pose a significant threat to bee populations (**Dietemann et al., 2014**). Concerns have been raised about the decreasing resilience of bees to diseasesmaybe as a result of the introduction of genetic strains with poor adaptation and increasingly interventionist beekeeping practices **(Locke & Fries, 2011; Neumann & Carreck, 2010).**

Climate change adds another layer of stress, affecting forage availability and disrupting the climatic niches required by different pollinator species **(DEFRA, 2014; Potts et al., 2010a; Kerr et al., 2015).** However, it's important to note that the causes of pollinator decline are complex and sometimes contested **(Philips, 2014; Carvalheiro et al., 2013).**

The need for improved knowledge sharing between scientists, conservation practitioners, and NGOs regarding pollinators' needs has been emphasized **(DEFRA, 2014).** However, beekeepers often feel that their perspectives are not given equal weight in these discussions, despite their practical experience **(Moore and Kosut, 2013; Phillips, 2014).**The diversity of perspectives among beekeepers themselves adds another layer of complexity to this issue **(Maderson & Wynne-Jones, 2016).**

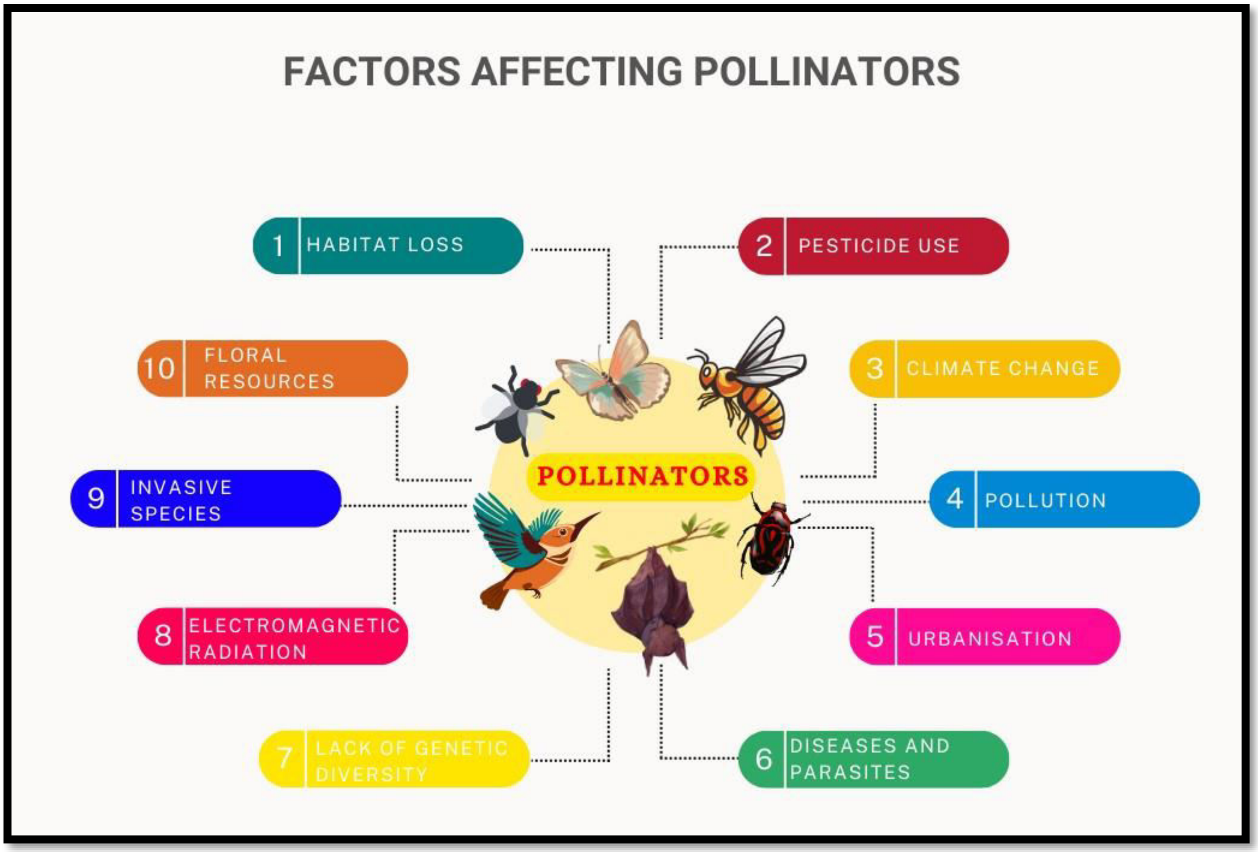
Wild bee populations, in particular, are experiencing significant declines due to habitat loss, pesticide use, and changing agricultural practices **(Potts et al., 2010; Goulson et al., 2015).** This decline threatens not only the bees themselves but also the plants that rely on them for reproduction **(Biesmeijer et al., 2006).** The use of agrochemicals, especially neonicotinoids, has been shown to have detrimental effects on pollinator health, leading to reduced pollination services and affecting crop productivity **(Woodcock et al., 2017; Rundlöf et al., 2015).**

Beekeepers face numerous challenges in combating bee diseases and parasites. Limited access to information, inadequate training and a lack of effective control methods often leave beekeepers feeling helpless **(Chauzat et al., 2013; Jacques et al., 2017).** The mandatory reporting of diseases and parasites, while intended to control outbreaks, can lead to the systematic destruction of hives. This policy may inadvertently encourage beekeepers to underreport these problems to avoid losing their colonies **(Mutinelli, 2011; Meixner et al., 2010).**The efficacy of available medicinal products for treating bee diseases is often limited and fails to meet the growing need for effective veterinary interventions in apiculture **(Rosenkranz et al., 2010; Genersch, 2010).** This situation is exacerbated by the increasing resistance of parasites, such as Varroa mites, to commonly used treatments **(Gonzalez-Cabrera et al., 2016; Sammataro et al., 2000).**

These multifaceted challenges underscore the need for a holistic approach to pollinator conservation, one that considers the complex interplay of ecological, agricultural, and socio-economic factors **(Dicks et al., 2016; Garibaldi et al., 2014).** Such an approach should incorporate the knowledge and experiences of beekeepers, scientists, and policymakers to develop more effective and sustainable strategies for pollinator protection **(Lowe et al., 2019; Brown et al., 2020).**The effectiveness of current medicinal products for treating bee diseases often falls short, highlighting a significant gap in addressing the increasing demand for efficient veterinary solutions in apiculture **(Rosenkranz et al., 2010).** This situation is exacerbated by the increasing resistance of parasites, such as Varroa mites, to commonly used treatments **(Gonzalez-Cabrera et al., 2016).**

The increasing mortality rates among bees have compelled beekeepers to frequently replace their hives, driving up the production costs. This frequent replacement often leads to a temporary drop in productivity, as newly introduced hives generally take time to reach the productivity levels of well-established ones (**vanEngelsdorp and Meixner, 2010**). The economic impact of these challenges is significant, affecting both individual beekeepers and the broader agricultural sector that depends on pollination services **(Gallai et al., 2009).**In response to these multifaceted challenges, research efforts are increasingly focusing on strategies to reduce morbidity and increase efficiency in beekeeping practices. This includes developing more effective and sustainable pest management techniques, improving bee breeding programs to enhance disease resistance, and investigating alternative approaches to hive management that can boost colony health and productivity **(Evans and Schwarz, 2011; Grozinger and Flenniken, 2019).**

Additionally, there is growing recognition of the need for a more holistic approach to pollinator conservation, which considers not only managed honey bees but also wild pollinators and the ecosystems that support them **(Garibaldi et al., 2013).** This integrated approach aims to address the complex interplay of factors affecting pollinator health and to develop more resilient and sustainable pollination systems for the future **(Dicks et al., 2016).**




**7. Policy Implications for Beekeeping and Biodiversity Conservation**

India, with a burgeoning population of over 1.28 billion and just 2.4% of the world's land area, faces a critical challenge to future food security. Despite having 4% of global water resources and 15% of the world's livestock, the country is grappling with a shrinking land base, stagnant agricultural production, and increasing pressure on water resources. Agriculture, encompassing forestry and fishing, continues to be the largest sector of the Indian economy. Although its contribution to GDP has decreased from 28.3% in 1993-94 to 14.4% in 2011-12, the sector still supports nearly half of the workforce, down from 64.8% to 48.9% over the same period. This persistent reliance on agriculture means that, despite its reduced economic output, a significant portion of India's workforce earns substantially less compared to their peers in industry and services.National and International Framework and Policies An International Pollinators Initiative was established by the Conference of Parties (COP) to the Convention on Biological Diversity in May 2000 for sustainable use and conservation of pollinators and was adopted in April 2002. This initiative's main focus was to monitor pollinators' population decline for probable reasons, determine economic loss due to pollinator decline, and conserve and restore the diversity of pollinators in agriculture and allied fields. The development and implementation of various pollinator initiatives have been catalyzed by International pollinator initiatives such as the Oceania Pollinator Initiative, North American Pollinator Protection Campaign, Brazilian Pollinators Initiative, Pollinator Partnership Action Plan (USA), Canadian Pollination Initiative, African Pollinator Initiative, All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, European Pollinator Initiative, National Pollinator Strategy for bees and other pollinators in England, Dutch Pollinator Strategy and Swiss National Action Plan for Bee Health **(Eardley, 2001).**The assessment report on Pollinators, Pollination, and Food Production by the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services has provided available information on pollinators as being regulators of the ecosystem. This assessment is concerned with the monetary and non-monetary role of wild and domesticated pollinators, their role in pollination and factors responsible for their changing status along with their impact on human beings. The 13th meeting of COP at the UN Biodiversity Conference held in Mexico, in 2016 recognized the assessment report of IBPES and realized the contribution of pollinators to Sustainable Development Goals. It also emphasized fostering policy measures and innovative actions to protect pollinators. This decision encourages government and non-government organizations to take necessary measures in this regard and make equivalent efforts in conserving and augmenting pollinators' population and collectively reducing factors responsible for their decline. During 2000–17, 36 USA states passed 110 policies about pollinators, viz. i) improved apiculture standards to manage their diseases and pests; ii) task forces to update pest management approaches; iii) pollinator habitat establishment and improvement; iv) funded monitoring and research on native insect pollinators, and v) increased public involvement and awareness on pollinators. In 1995, The Forgotten Pollinators Campaign was launched in North America followed by a book publication under the same name **(Buchmann and Nabhan, 1996)**, and this campaign demanded policy changes that would favor pollinators' habitat **(Ingram et al., 1996)**. The United States implemented two policies in favor of insect pollinators, viz. designing a state insect and pollinator week in 2006, and by 2016, all of the United States had designated and implemented pollinators weeks under the preambles "Pollinator species such as birds and insects are essential partners of farmers and ranchers in producing much of our food supply", "pollination plays a vital role in the health of our national forests and economic development" and "pollinator species provide significant environmental benefits that are necessary for maintaining healthy, biodiverse ecosystems". In this accordance, New Mexico also designated the Sandia hairstreak butterfly (Callophrys McFarland) as a state butterfly to bring its aesthetic values to notice **(Hall and Steiner, 2019).** The Government of India has taken an initiative to include pollinators as a principal component of IPM with more focus directed at advocating such pest management strategies that would favor the pollinators and sustain their populations. It has taken necessary steps to reduce overuse and ensure proper use and disposal of pesticides by agriculture and horticulture growers in India. In this regard, the GoI established ICAR-NCIPM (National Centre for Integrated Pest Management) in 1988 to reduce pest-induced yield losses and maximize crop productivity. Since then, it has validated and refined several strategies in favor of IPM like conservation of beneficial organisms, adequate training and knowledge for farmers, beforehand pest prevention measures, use of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), and so on. It also promotes the need-based use of synthetic pesticides at their recommended doses along with careful follow-up of their label instructions. The data collected regarding pesticide residues under "Monitoring of Pesticide Residues at National Level" is dealt with by concerned officials to impose proper implications of pesticide use by the context of the IPM approach and create awareness among growers and pesticide dealers **(Dar et al., 2020)**. However, necessary policies in this regard need to be developed or implemented in India that reduce the impact of chemicals on beneficial insects and provide alternative, pollinator-friendly approaches to pest management.

Recognizing the vital role that pollinators play, the Indian government has taken several steps to protect them from the harmful effects of fertilizers and pesticides. These initiatives reflect a growing global awareness of the critical role pollinators play in food security and ecosystem health **(Potts et al., 2016).**The goal of the National Beekeeping and Honey Mission (NBHM) is to promote beekeeping and honey production in India by providing financial assistance to beekeepers for purchasing bee colonies and necessary beekeeping supplies. **(Government of India, 2020)**. The NBHM aligns with global efforts to support beekeeping as a sustainable livelihood and conservation tool **(Bradbear, 2009).** By promoting beekeeping, the mission indirectly contributes to pollinator conservation and agricultural productivity **(Garibaldi et al., 2013).**

The Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program minimizes reliance on pesticides by encouraging the use of natural predators and alternative, non-toxic methods for pest control. **(Chandler et al., 2011).** This approach is crucial for pollinator health, as pesticides, particularly neonicotinoids, have been linked to bee population declines **(Woodcock et al., 2017).** IPM strategies have shown promise in maintaining crop yields while reducing pesticide use, thereby benefiting both farmers and pollinators **(Barzman et al., 2015).**The National Mission for Sustainable Agriculture advocates for sustainable agricultural methods that benefit pollinators. The goal is to promote organic farming and reduce the use of chemicals in agriculture **(Government of India, 2014).** This aligns with research showing that organic farming practices can support higher pollinator diversity and abundance compared to conventional farming **(Kovács-Hostyánszki et al., 2017).** The NMSA's emphasis on sustainable practices could significantly contribute to creating pollinator-friendly agricultural landscapes **(Dicks et al., 2016)**.The National Action Plan for Pollinators is a strategic initiative aimed at safeguarding and preserving pollinators in

India. It encompasses actions to decrease pesticide usage and enhance the protection of pollinators and their natural habitats(**ICAR, 2020**). This initiative reflects a growing trend of national pollinator strategies, similar to those implemented in other countries (**Dicks et al., 2016).** The NAPP's holistic approach, addressing both threat reduction and habitat conservation, is crucial for effective pollinator protection (**Senapathi et al., 2017).**These government initiatives demonstrate a multi-faceted approach to pollinator conservation, addressing key threats such as pesticide use and habitat loss. However, the effectiveness of these programs will depend on their implementation and the engagement of various stakeholders, including farmers, beekeepers, and the general public (**Garibaldi et al., 2014**).Additionally, there's growing recognition of the need to protect and promote native pollinator species alongside managed honeybees (**Mallinger et al., 2017**).The success of these initiatives will also depend on robust monitoring and evaluation systems. Citizen science projects, involving beekeepers and farmers in data collection, could provide valuable information on pollinator populations and the effectiveness of conservation measures (**Domroese & Johnson, 2017).**

## 8. Conservation of Pollinators Management Strategies

Pollinators, particularly honeybees, are indispensable for maintaining ecological balance and agricultural productivity. However, they face numerous threats, including habitat loss, pesticide exposure, and climate change. Effective management and conservation strategies are crucial to ensure their survival.Native honeybee subspecies, in particular, are invaluable genetic reservoirs (**Crotti et al., 2013**). Their adaptability to local conditions is essential for wild bee populations and overall pollination success. Honeybees are generalist pollinators with large colonies, capable of providing extensive pollination services (**Kevan and Phillips, 2001; Southwick and Southwick, 1992**). In degraded ecosystems, they even function as "rescue pollinators" (**Aizen and Feinsinger, 1994**).Pesticides and fertilizers pose significant risks to pollinators. These chemicals can directly harm bees, reduce flower quality, and contaminate food sources (**van der Sluijs et al., 2013; Sanchez-Bayo and Goka, 2014).** This, combined with habitat loss and climate change, has led to a decline in pollinator populations and issues like Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) (**van Engelsdorp et al., 2009; Hendriksma et al., 2015**).

To protect pollinators, a comprehensive approach is necessary such as Habitat Restoration and Creation which include establishing and preserving diverse habitats, such as wildflower strips, hedgerows, and natural areas, provides essential food and nesting resources for pollinators (**Kremen et al., 2002**).Sustainable Agricultural Practices like Implementing integrated pest management (IPM) to minimize pesticide use, adopting selective pesticides with lower toxicity, and diversifying crop rotations can reduce pollinator exposure to harmful chemicals (**Gill et al., 2012; National Pesticide**

**Information Center, 2023).** Beekeeping policies supporting sustainable beekeeping practices and conducting large-scale beekeeping surveys (**Lodesani and Costa, 2003; EFSA, 2008**) can help monitor bee populations and inform conservation policies. Continuous research on pollinator ecology and behavior, as well as monitoring population trends, is essential for developing effective conservation strategies. Raising public awareness about the importance of pollinators and promoting pollinator-friendly practices can contribute to widespread conservation efforts we can ensure the long-term health and abundance of these vital organisms.Incorporating climate change resilience into pollinator conservation strategies is crucial. Research and prevention measures for pollinator diseases, such as American foulbrood and varroa mites, are essential. Collaborating on a global scale can address transnational threats to pollinators and share best practices.By addressing these challenges and implementing effective conservation measures, we can safeguard the invaluable services provided by pollinators for both ecosystems and agriculture.

**9. Future Aspects in Beekeeping**

The complex challenges facing pollinators and beekeeping necessitate multifaceted research approaches that integrate ecological, agricultural, and socio-economic perspectives. Future research directions should focus on several key areas to enhance our understanding and develop effective conservation strategies.

One critical area is the development of sustainable pest management techniques that minimize harm to pollinators while effectively controlling agricultural pests. This includes research into integrated pest management strategies and the development of bee-safe pesticides (**Sponsler et al., 2019**). Studies on the sub lethal effects of pesticides on bee behavior, cognition, and overall colony health are also crucial (**Siviter et al., 2018**).

Genetic research offers promising avenues for enhancing bee resilience. Efforts to identify and breed for traits that confer resistance to diseases and parasites, particularly Varroa mites, could significantly benefit both managed and wild bee populations (**Guichard et al., 2020**). Additionally, research into the genetic diversity of bee populations and its role in adaptation to environmental stressors is essential (**López-Uribe et al., 2017**).

The impact of climate change on pollinator-plant interactions requires further investigation. Studies on phenological mismatches between flowering times and pollinator activity, as well as shifts in species distributions, are critical for predicting and mitigating the effects of climate change on pollination services (**Scaven & Rafferty, 2013; Kerr et al., 2015**).

Research into novel beekeeping practices that prioritize bee health and natural behavior is gaining traction. This includes studies on alternative hive designs, minimal intervention management techniques, and the benefits of diverse floral resources in apicultural settings **(Seeley, 2019; Nicholls & Altieri, 2013).**

The role of landscape structure and composition in supporting pollinator communities is another important research area. Studies on the effectiveness of pollinator corridors, the impact of urban greening initiatives, and the optimal design of agri-environmental schemes can inform land management practices **(Kremen & M'Gonigle, 2015; Hall et al., 2017).**

Investigations into the complex interactions between managed honeybees and wild pollinators are crucial. This includes research on competition for resources, pathogen spillover, and the complementarity of pollination services provided by different species **(Mallinger et al., 2017; Graystock et al., 2016).**

The economics of pollination services and beekeeping practices require further study. Research on the true value of pollination services, the economic impacts of pollinator declines, and the development of market-based incentives for pollinator conservation can inform policy decisions **(Breeze et al., 2016; Garibaldi et al., 2014)**.

Social science research is increasingly recognized as crucial in pollinator conservation. Studies on beekeeper knowledge systems, public perceptions of pollinators, and the effectiveness of citizen science initiatives can enhance community engagement and inform conservation strategies **(Maderson & Wynne-Jones, 2016; Lorenz & Stark, 2015)**.

Technological innovations in monitoring pollinator populations and bee health present exciting research opportunities. The development of non-invasive monitoring techniques, such as acoustic monitoring of beehives and automated image recognition for pollinator identification, could revolutionize data collection and early warning systems **(Ngo et al., 2019; Bjerge et al., 2021).**

Interdisciplinary research that bridges ecology, agriculture, and social sciences is essential for developing holistic solutions. This includes studies on the social-ecological dynamics of pollinator conservation and the development of participatory approaches to conservation planning **(Dicks et al., 2016; Reed et al., 2017)**.

Finally, research into the potential of novel pollination systems, such as robotic pollinators or hand pollination techniques, while controversial, may become increasingly relevant as insurance against pollinator declines **(Chechetka et al., 2017)**.

These diverse research directions reflect the complexity of the challenges facing pollinators and beekeeping. By pursuing these avenues, researchers can contribute to the development of more effective, sustainable, and socially acceptable strategies for pollinator conservation and the maintenance of crucial ecosystem services **(Potts et al., 2016; Kleijn et al., 2019)**.

Citizen science has emerged as a powerful tool in biodiversity research and conservation **(Bonney et al. 2009)** define citizen science as public participation in organized research efforts, which can significantly expand the scope and scale of scientific data collection. In the context of beekeeping and pollinator conservation, citizen science offers a unique opportunity to bridge the gap between scientific research and practical conservation efforts.

**10. Conclusion**

This study highlights the significant potential of integrating beekeeping, scientific research, and biodiversity conservation efforts. By leveraging beekeepers' knowledge and involving them in research, we can deepen our understanding of pollinator ecosystems and develop more effective conservation strategies. A balanced approach combining the management of both domesticated and wild bee populations, preserving natural habitats, and adopting bee-friendly agricultural practices—can foster more resilient and diverse ecosystems. This holistic perspective not only supports bee health but also advances broader conservation goals, contributing to the sustainability of agricultural systems.

Future research should prioritize the development of standardized beekeeping protocols, explore the long-term impacts of different apiculture practices on native bee populations, and focus on translating beekeepers' knowledge into actionable conservation policies. Strengthening collaboration among beekeepers, farmers, scientists, NGOs, local authorities, ecologists, the private sector, and the general public is crucial for the sustainability of Indian agriculture. Coordinating research efforts and promptly sharing data will help protect the ecosystem services provided by honeybees and other pollinators, which are vital for the health and productivity of agricultural systems.

Community engagement and awareness initiatives are essential for the successful protection of pollinators and the conservation of biodiversity. By fostering a sense of stewardship and offering practical ways for individuals to contribute, these initiatives can lead to more resilient ecosystems, benefiting both pollinators and human communities.

When managing insect pests, it is crucial to target only those populations that exceed the economic threshold. Chemical pest control methods should be minimized, and non-chemical, organic measures should be prioritized. If chemical pest management is necessary, pesticides must be used with caution. Labels should be carefully read to ensure safe handling, and pesticides should not be applied near pollinator nesting or foraging sites or during peak pollinator activity. Using pesticides with coarse droplet sizes, avoiding drift into pollinator habitats, and relying on biopesticides or selective pesticides that do not harm non-target organisms are important measures to protect pollinators.

Agronomic practices that disrupt pollinator habitats should be avoided. Conserving biodiversity by planting flowers within agricultural ecosystems can provide essential foraging sites. Hedges or shrubs should be planted between pesticide application areas and pollinator nests to reduce drift. Additionally, pest-resistant crops that encourage pollinator activity should be cultivated.

Integrated Pest and Pollinator Management (IPPM) offers a co-management strategy for balancing pest control with pollinator conservation. IPPM encourages the careful and strategic use of pesticides to minimize their impact on pollinators and their habitats. Government policies and awareness programs aimed at enhancing pollinator populations should be emphasized, along with local efforts to reduce pollinator decline.

By embracing a scientific approach to beekeeping, we can make it a cornerstone of pollinator protection and biodiversity conservation. This involves adopting sustainable practices that prioritize bee health over maximizing honey yields, such as leaving enough honey for overwintering, reducing antibiotic use, and promoting genetic diversity within hives. Beekeepers can also contribute to habitat conservation by advocating for and participating in the creation of pollinator-friendly landscapes, planting diverse native flowers, creating nesting sites for wild bees, and reducing pesticide use in surrounding areas.

The scientific approach to beekeeping also underscores the importance of monitoring and research. Beekeepers can provide valuable data on bee health, population dynamics, and foraging patterns, which can inform broader conservation efforts. Integrating technology into beekeeping, such as using smart hive monitoring systems, offers new opportunities for early detection of health issues and targeted interventions, benefiting both managed honeybees and broader environmental conditions.

In summary, beekeeping, when aligned with scientific understanding and conservation efforts, plays a vital role in supporting pollinator health and biodiversity, leading to more sustainable agricultural systems and resilient ecosystems.

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