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'Agriculture, beekeeping can put buzz back into livelihoods'

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Representative image

PANAJI: There is a need to return to agriculture and make it lucrative, rather than depending only on mining and tourism, said general manager, NABARD, Kamakshi Pai.

Pai was speaking at 'Thinking Forward - Rural Livelihoods', a roundtable discussion on issue of rural livelihoods and development organised by the Goa Livelihoods Forum, and

attended by various agriculturists - from beekeepers to those running 'gaushalas' (cow shelters).

राष्ट्रीय कृषि और ग्रामीण विकास बैंक

National Bank for Agriculture and Rural Development

कापारट सचार विभाग

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BEYOND MINING



Gaushalas (Cow shelters) | Cattle urine and cowdung cakes are in great demand

Agriculture | Integration of landbase to boost productivity

Fruticulture | Growing exotic fruits

Apiculture (Beekeeping) | Farmers can use colonies of bees to increase yield of their farms

Agriculture doesn't only refer to only farming per se, but an integration of landbase plus allied activities like dairy, poultry, piggery and beekeeping which add to the income of farmers, she said.

The area under agriculture is shrinking today, Pai said, pointing out to the state's garbage woes and urging people to look for solutions without depending on the government.

"The biggest problem is the garbage problem. Water bodies are being choked and contaminated by plastic. We always want the government to do something about this. When we talk about livelihoods, we need to look at out of the box solutions," she said, adding that if self-help groups can clear garbage on behalf of the

panchayat, the solution needs to come from the people.

Suprajit Raikar, a professional beekeeper, said there are over 100 beekeepers in the state and farmers need to be educated so that they don't destroy the colonies of bees on their farms, but on the contrary, use them to increase their yield. Farmers' markets, where locally produced products are sold, must be encouraged, he said.

Prize-winning farmer Laban D'Souza said he is able to rake in a substantial income from his farm in Nuvem where he grows a variety of exotic fruits and encouraged other farmers to share their knowledge so that more people find reasons to return to the profession. Uday Deshmukh, who has set up a 'gaushala', said he was able to break-even six months ago. "Cattle urine and cowdung cakes are in great demand," he said.

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