

Minutes of the 16th Annual General Meeting of National Seed Association of India

The 16th Annual General Meeting (AGM) of National Seed Association of India (NSAI) was held on 9th September 2022, at Hotel Marigold, Begumpet, Hyderabad, Telangana.

Welcome of Chief Guest and GC Members

The meeting was presided over by Shri **M Prabhakar Rao, President**.

Quorum of the Meeting

Before the commencement of AGM, the President enquired about the fulfillment of quorum for the meeting. Executive Director, NSAI mentioned that as per NSAI By-laws the quorum requirement for AGM is 10% of the total members of NSAI. He further mentioned that as on date NSAI has 330 members and 10% of it comes to 33, while the total number of member companies present in the meeting were 59. Thus, the quorum for the AGM was complete. The list of NSAI members who attended AGM is attached.

Welcome address by Executive Director, NSAI

AGM started with **Shri R K Trivedi, Executive Director** welcoming the OB members, GC members and all NSAI members who have attended AGM and mentioned that their presence in the AGM has shown their solidarity for the growth and progress of NSAI.

Highlights of Industry Issues by Shri M Prabhakar Rao, President, NSAI

The President welcomed to all the participants and thanked them for attending the AGM. He also thanked **Shri Singireddy Niranjan Reddy**, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of Telangana State for joining online in the Technical Session as well as in the AGM and addressing to the august gathering. He quoted that the Minister in his address indicated about the need for intensified research on developing seed to meet the growing needs of higher food production and productivity with nutritional values in the backdrop of growing ecological imbalances.

Shri Rao further mentioned that the private seed sector has grown significantly not only in business volume but also with respect to seed distribution network. Now, the challenge for policymakers is to improve and make further reforms in existing regulations to promote both formal and non-formal seed systems and also support breeding, selection of new varieties and quality seed production for providing better seeds to the farmers. NSAI team has been working with the Seed Division of DAFW, Government of India to bring in needed amendment in the seed legislation.

He informed the members that NSAI is also advocating to its members for licensing of new plant varieties under the framework of PPVFR Act which has been deliberated in the day long Technical Session held today before AGM. A synchronized system of variety registration by PPVFRA and varietal development by private seed companies would have a positive impact on the seed market by enhancing quality seeds and would make the seed price affordable to the farmers. The clarity about the nomenclature of the variety helps the farmer to choose the right product and makes it easy for the Industry to promote quality seed sales. These initiatives would certainly encourage the farmers adopting to new crop varieties/hybrids aimed at achieving higher productivity of crops.

The President further indicated that NSAI has been working with regulatory bodies and policy makers to check the marketing of spurious seeds and also suggesting them to make policy/regulatory reforms for early release of new technology. NSAI members are committed for the marketing of quality seeds but grey seed companies sometimes bring cloud on the products of good seed companies also.

As regards income tax regulation and exemptions to the seed industry, President mentioned that these are also important issues requiring attention of CBDT and Ministry of Agriculture. NSAI had submitted several representations and requested for a favorable recommendation by CBDT to exempt income of seed companies from seed production related activities from income tax.

In addition, NSAI had already requested the Ministry of Agriculture and Farmers' Welfare for creation of Seed Export Promotion Council with active support of NSAI and APEDA. This will offer a great opportunity to enhance farmers' income, create rural employment and at the same time play a strategically important role in global agriculture. He also suggested that NSAI may take up with concerned authorities for harmonizing Seed legislations in South Asian countries to facilitate easier exchange of seeds and facilitate export of quality seed from India.

He expressed his concern for SME seed companies and indicated that NSAI has been writing to MoAFW to provide special financial assistance /subsidy to SME seed companies for R&D and development of infrastructure facilities for seed production, processing and testing. NSAI also continuously keeps flagging the key issues like seed subsidy, breeder seed distribution and seed traceability systems concerning small seed companies.

At the end, he complimented NSAI Secretariat and the Organizing Committee for successfully organizing the Technical Session and the AGM and also appreciated the efforts made by NSAI team in advocating for the core issues of Indian seed sector.

Address by Chief Guest, Shri Singireddy Niranjan Reddy, Hon'ble Minister for Agriculture, Government of Telangana

The Hon'ble Minister in his virtual address said that agriculture is the backbone of the Indian economy and it has made great strides from the dependence on other countries for its food needs, during the early sixties, to the present day self-reliance in the production of fruits, dairy products and fish apart from food crops. But, we should not stop here as there is a need to achieve more considering the growing needs of the increasing population with diminishing land resources on one hand and growing ecological imbalances on the other. The Minister also said that quality seeds play a key role in the development of agriculture sector and this was evidenced by the remarkable progress achieved by the Indian seed industry in producing hybrid seeds of several food and commercial crops. Telangana, in particular, is the most suitable not only in the country, but also in the world, for quality seed production, processing and storage. He appreciated NSAI for organizing the Technical Session and AGM in Hyderabad which demonstrates strength of Telangana State in seed sector.

Confirmation of the Minutes of the last AGM held on 27th October, 2021

The General Body confirmed and approved the minutes of the 15th AGM held on 27th October, 2022 in New Delhi unanimously.

Presentation of the Annual Report by General Secretary, NSAI

The Annual Report 2021-2022 was presented by **Dr. B B Pattanaik, General Secretary**. He applauded high visibility of NSAI for taking up various issues of seed industry at different forum and proved itself as a true representative of the Indian seed industry.

He mentioned that NSAI has been addressing major concerns of the Indian seed industry through its frequent communications to concerned departments of Central and State Governments apart from holding regular meetings with the concerned authorities to emphasize industry concerns. The members have also been extending their overwhelming support to NSAI Secretariat, which is evident from their active participation in the NSAI events, meetings and issue-based Workshops.

General Secretary further informed the gathering that the Governing Council (GC) of the NSAI met four times on 27th October 2021, 25th December 2021, 08th June 2022 and 10th August 2022. In these meetings, the GC reviewed and deliberated on the progress of various activities of NSAI and approved the future plan of action. The GC members also discussed about NSAI Statement of Accounts for FY 2021-22, Approval of Annual Budget for FY 2022-23 and organization of Indian Seed Congress 2023.

He also indicated that the NSAI membership fee had been scaled down to facilitate member companies for renewal of their membership and encourage new members to join NSAI. As on 31st August 2022, NSAI was having 330 active members, which included 285 members in ordinary category, 28 in Associate, and 5 in Associations and 1 in Public Sector category.

The NSAI had maintained a continuous exchange of information with the seed industry through various communication channels. Dr. Pattanaik happily announced that the one of the important magazines in seed sector, the “**Seed Times**” which is very popular amongst seed fraternity and got disrupted during Covid 19 is again being brought out by NSAI with its new edition on the theme “***Advancements in Seed Quality and value addition for Improvement of Production and Productivity of Oilseeds and Pulses***”. This will maintain the high standard of articles covering new, innovative and useful information for the Seed industry. NSAI will keep focus on different theme-based contents in its future issues also.

NSAI website has also been revamped to serve as a repository of information for members, he added. “***What's New at NSAI***” section updates members on recent industry advancements, workshops, and conferences. Important notifications from the government can also be located in the section titled “Important Notifications”.

He also informed to the members about continuous engagement of NSAI for improving the ease of doing business for the Indian seed industry. He mentioned that for the benefit of its members to share information, NSAI keeps updating its presence on social media platforms like WhatsApp groups, Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn and YouTube.

General Secretary further observed that NSAI has been engaged in making efforts towards improving the regulatory ecosystem for the Indian seed industry by taking up various regulatory issue related to the legislations like Seeds Act, Biodiversity Act and Environment (Protection) Act etc., in various meetings chaired by the Union Agriculture Minister Shri Narendra Singh Tomar ji, Secretary Agriculture, DAFW, Joint Secretary (Seed) DAFW and other senior officials of concerned departments.

NSAI took up various issues raised by the members, from time to time, with concerned agencies including MoAFW, Government of India, and various State Agriculture Ministries, Departments, and local authorities to get the same resolved. The outbreak of COVID 19, impact of climate change in agriculture and policy/regulatory concerns at State level were the main challenges which were taken up by NSAI at appropriate forum to ensure relief to the seed industry.

He informed to the members that NSAI is now a regular participant of seed related conferences and seminars organized at National and International level. NSAI had also organized series of webinars on emerging issues like "Harnessing Genomics and modern breeding innovations for developing better seeds", and "Career Orientation Webinar on Seed sector".

NSAI international engagement had also been growing over years. NSAI discussed the opportunity for NSAI member companies to join hands through International Maize Improvement Consortium - Asia Phase III and had a meeting with Director General CIMMYT, Director of CIMMYT Global Maize Program, Asia Regional Representative, CIMMYT and Managing Director, Borlaug Institute for South Asia (BISA). NSAI team also had a meeting with **Mr. Hugo Javier Gobbi**, Ambassador of Republic of Argentina and **Mariono Beheran**, Minister Agriculture Attaché of the Argentina Embassy to share the knowledge and exchange the ideas about the Indian and Argentina Seed industry and explore the possibilities for future cooperation between the two countries.

He further added that NSAI supported the recent International Conference on "***Harnessing Indian Agriculture for Indigenous and Global Prosperity***" held at NASC Complex, New Delhi jointly organised by Bharatiya Kisan Sangh and Bhartiya Agro-Economic Research Centre. President, NSAI also addressed the delegates of the conference on the theme "***Opportunities for Entrepreneurship Development in Agriculture***".

NSAI Secretariat has been strengthened with the addition of **Dr R K Tripathi** as Director (Technical) and **Dr Pramod Sharma** as Research Associate in its staff. Dr R K Tripathi has an experience of over 40 years of working in agriculture sector, involving seed management, agricultural extension, research and post-harvest management, while Dr. Pramod Sharma, with a teaching and research background in Seed Technology, is also a recipient of various awards and have two years of teaching experience.

At the end General Secretary mentioned that the NSAI has worked tirelessly to bring important issues that are crucial to our members, to the attention of the Central and State Governments. He thanked all the GC and OB members for extending their support for various activities of NSAI and also to all NSAI members for participating in the 16th AGM to make the event a grand success.

Presentation of the Statement of Accounts and Auditors Report by Treasurer, NSAI

Shri Vaibhav Ravi Kashikar, Treasurer, presented the financial statements and Audit report of the NSAI for the year ended 31st March 2022.

He highlighted that the detailed Auditor Report and P&L Statement had been made available in the Annual report 2021-22. The total expenditure for the Year was Rs. 1,34,04,083/- as against Rs. 1,41,31,091/- in the Previous year, resulting in an excess of income over expenses by Rs. 18,43,449/- as against of Rs. 6,44,972/- in the Previous year.

The Highlights of the Budget for FY 2022-23 are as under:

Total Budgeted Revenue is	Rs. 1,37,75,000/-.
The Total Budgeted Expenditure	Rs. 1,17,00,000/-
Budgeted Surplus	Rs. 20,75,000/-

He informed the members that for their reference, the budget statement for FY 2022-23 has been given in the Registration Kit.

The Treasurer also mentioned that in case of membership, this year NSAI received membership fees of Rs. 96,90,400/-(Ninety-six lakh ninety thousand four hundred only) as compared to Rs. 74,71,000/-(Seventy-four lakh seventy-one thousand only) in the previous year, which was an increase of almost Rs. 22,19,400/- (Twenty-two lakh nineteen thousand four hundred only) over the previous year.

He thanked members for timely renewal of membership.

He believed and hoped that NSAI would reach new heights in coming years with the members' support and wished them all the best for success. The General Body accepted and approved the **Statement of Accounts and Auditors Report of NSAI for the year 2021-22** unanimously.

Appointment of Auditor for FY 2022-23

The Treasurer sought approval of members in the AGM for the appointment of M/s S A K G & Co., New Delhi as a Statutory Auditors of NSAI for the year 2022-23. The General Body accepted and approved unanimously that M/s S A K G & Co., New Delhi is re-appointed as Statutory Auditors of NSAI for the year 2022-23 at a remuneration of Rs 35,000 per annum

Approval of the Annual Budget for FY 2022-23

The Treasurer further sought the approval of Governing Body for the Budget of NSAI for the year 2022-23 based on the details presented during the AGM. The General Body unanimously accepted and approved the Annual Budget of NSAI for the FY 2022-23.

Any other item with the permission of Chair

At the end, the President opened the floor for discussion on various issues of seed industry. After discussion following issues emerged:

- 1. Shri Ramanna Rao** from Ganga Kaveri Seeds raised the issue of non-application of tolerance limit in the results of State Seed Testing Laboratories for various quality parameters and even a slight deviation was not accepted by the state Government and action had been taken against the seed companies. This had been, particularly observed in the genetic purity for *Bt* Cotton Seeds, where seeds are tested only on a sample size of 25 seeds and genetic purity standards does not match with the sample size. It was therefore, suggested that for *Bt* Cotton seed genetic purity tests at least a sample size of 400 seeds may be taken and also tolerance limits should be prescribed for different quality parameters for cotton seeds.
- 2. Dr Jai Singh, MD, Sakata Seeds** raised three important issues. One was concerning high testing fee being charged for hybrids intended to be marketed in a State by the SAUs of the concerned State and second is the cumbersome and difficult licensing procedure for hybrids seeds to be sold in multiple States, which creates a huge financial burden on the seed companies. It was explained that the NSAI has already made a proposal to Government of India for “One Nation One License” system. Once this is approved it will be a great relief to the seed companies. Joint Secretary (Seeds), DAFW had also indicated in his virtual address that Government is looking into this positively.

The other issue was with respect to imported vegetable seeds which are developed in one country and sent to other country for seed processing and packaging. From that second country, if it has been sent to importing country *i.e.* India, then the first country endorsed declarations on Phytosanitary certificate is not accepted by Indian authorities and they want certificate from the second country, which is difficult to obtain, because the seed is produced in the first country.

In this regards, it was mentioned that as per the office memorandum (OM) issued by Department of PQ, companies were asked that declarations required on Phytosanitary certificate should be endorsed by origin country or origin State Phytosanitary certificate.

This has been creating problems for the Indian Seed companies and affecting the seed import. It was decided that MD Sakata Seeds will give a detailed note to NSAI on this

and NSAI would take up this issue at appropriate level in the Central Government for an early resolution.

3. **Shri GB Jena** from Srimad Seeds informed that the Government of Odisha is not approving marketing of TL Seeds in State. It was felt that NSAI initiatives on One Nation One License once cleared would solve such problems, though the Seeds (Control) Order and Seeds Act don't prohibit the sale of TL seeds.
4. A number of participants raised the issue of GST on Seeds. While in Telangana State as per GST advance ruling, it was reported that in-house processing of Seeds was exempted from GST but GST was levied on any custom seed processing. Similarly in West Bengal, GST on R&D process was raised from 8% to 18% as per latest GST Council decision, which would be discouraging to seed companies for investment in R&D in Seeds. GST notices were also being received by seed companies to bring the accounts of last 5 years regarding seed processing and storage work.

President expressed his concern on this issue and asked the member, particularly M/S Ganga Kaveri Seeds, to give a detailed note and their opinion on imposition of GST on different activities of seed business to NSAI so that a strong representation could be put up to the concerned authorities.

5. **Shri Ramanna Rao** from Ramanna Agri Product, Karimnagar, informed that it was not possible to put date of packaging on the labels as it was placed on the bags in advance and test reports were received late, hence only month and year is given on it. Seed law enforcement agencies are not allowing them taking the plea that Seeds Rules requires Date, Month and Year of packaging to be put on the labels. Looking into difficulty of the industry, the matter may be taken up with concerned authorities to provide relaxation from mentioning the date of packaging on the label.
6. **Shri Ramanna Rao** also indicated that NSAI is charging a higher application fee for Breeder Seed allotment, whereas, for members it is free. It was explained by President that since NSAI membership fee has been substantially reduced and is even much less than the breeder seed application fee for non-members, we may encourage non-member to take NSAI membership to get many facilities including Breeder seed allotment free of cost.
7. One of the members mentioned that in case of RIB in *Bt* cotton genetic purity may go down to 90% in view of Refugia. However, the percentage allowed is ranging from 5-10% for the RIB and in case of Hybrids 95% genetic purity is required and with this parameter many

times Bt with RIB sample fail. It was explained by ED, NSAI that NSAI has already represented to Seed Division, DAFW to revise genetic purity, gene purity and sample size for *Bt* Cotton especially in the light of RIB concept.

Vote of Thanks by the Vice President, NSAI

At the end **Shri Dineshbhai Patel, Vice President** proposed vote of thanks. On behalf of NSAI, he expressed sincere gratitude to the members who attended the event and put forth their opinions, problems, and suggestions for betterment of NSAI functioning which will motivate NSAI in its future endeavors.

He also mentioned that Shri M Prabhakar Rao, President of NSAI has greatly contributed for the success of the event. Despite his other important commitments, he had been closely monitoring the Technical Session and AGM activities even for the smallest matters. He also sincerely appreciated Shri Praveen Kumar, Shri Ch Rambabu, Shri V Venkateshwarlu, the local GC members for their assistance, guidance and support.

At the end he acknowledged the NSAI Secretariat team's efforts for organizing the event successfully.

