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State Budget 2002-2003

PART A

Hon'ble Speaker,

1. I rise to present the budget for the year 2002-03.

2. Two years ago my Government spelt out a vision for our State. I enumerated the challenges that our state faced and laid the foundation for a prosperous future. This vision has guided our decisions and actions. The previous two budgets converted this vision into specific action initiatives.

3. We have involved citizens in areas ranging from watershed management to housing to Stree Shakti groups, and in the strengthening of Panchayath Raj Insititutions and Local bodies.

4. This budget of my Government will build on the work of the past two years, strengthen people's participation and stimulate growth and employment generation.

5 The forces of technology and globalisation are changing the world. Economic shocks originating in one part of the world now affect another part immediately. We in Karnataka cannot remain in isolation. The global slowdown has increased the challenges, and we have to respond with appropriate policies.

6. Man-made tragedies have worsened the economic situation. The dawn of the new century has posed an old problem - terrorism - as a new threat that needs to be fought with the utmost urgency. We have the resilience to face this new challenge. The acts of a few cannot weaken the resolve of the State to protect its citizens. At the same time, we have to convince the disgruntled few about the benevolence of our vision of an egalitarian, civilised and decent society where material aspirations are fulfilled along with inner needs.

Fiscal situation

7. Sir, I made a departure last year by emphasising the fiscal situation at the outset of my budget. My government has laid emphasis on fiscal responsibility and prudence in the last two years. We would continue to do so.

8. I take pride in the fact that Karnataka has been acclaimed for its fiscal prudence. In achieving this distinction in the country, my government

acknowledges the support given by the Members of this House.

9. We have to cut unproductive expenditure so as to be able to provide enhanced allocations for social sectors like health, education, and social justice and infrastructure sectors including agriculture, irrigation and roads. This would pave the way for speedier economic growth and employment generation in rural areas. Resources raised by the State, both revenue and borrowings, have to be put to optimum use.

10 The fiscal situation of the State is not a cause for alarm, but it has to be managed with care. The government had tabled a Medium Term Fiscal Plan (2000-01 to 2004-05) in the budget session last year. It was a plan for fiscal stabilisation in the next four years. I propose to make the MTFP a rolling annual document which would provide an outlook of the fiscal situation in the medium term and would also indicate the actual performance against the stated fiscal targets. The Medium Term Fiscal Plan (2002-03 to 2005-06) would be placed before the Legislature in the current budget session.

11. Hon'ble Members may recall that we had planned to eliminate revenue deficit and peg fiscal deficit at 3 percent of the Gross State Domestic Product (GSDP) by 2004-05. But the slow-down in the economy has resulted in the projected revenues not being realised. Consequently, future growth has been projected taking a lower base. This would result in the fiscal targets being achieved a year later than what we had planned for. To provide legislative backing to the objective of achieving fiscal balance, the Fiscal Responsibility Bill will be introduced in the House soon.

12. The fiscal deficit for the current year was anticipated at Rs.5127 crore. A

huge short fall of Rs.1375 crore in anticipated revenue - Rs.550 crore in central tax devolution, Rs.735 crore in state taxes and Rs.90 crore in state non-tax revenue, necessitated mid-course correction of the budget estimates. However, as in the past, our endeavour has been to protect the allocation for high priority development expenditure in spite of the shortfall. The fiscal deficit in the Revised Estimates for the current year is Rs.5151 crore which is very close to our original estimate.

13. To enable individual departments to focus on long term goals based on medium term strategies, we have embarked upon preparing departmental medium term fiscal plans as well. These plans would contain financial projections and measurable performance indicators. We would be placing before the Legislature such Plans for five pilot departments namely Primary and Secondary Education, Health & Family Welfare, Medical Education, Public Works and Rural Water Supply component of Rural Development Department.

AGRICULTURE AND ALLIED SECTORS

14. I have always accorded the highest priority to these sectors. Honourable Members would appreciate

that Government spends about Rs. 5100 crore for agriculture, which includes Rs.2000 crore towards power subsidy and around Rs. 2900 crore for irrigation. This is about 25 percent of the state's annual budget, and is a measure of my Government's commitment to agriculture.

15. The government is actively implementing the Rashtriya Krishi Bima Yojane, the national crop insurance programme. We have covered about 6 lakh farmers under this programme during the current year. This is double the coverage of the previous year.

16. Unfortunately, the state faced a difficult period due to drought conditions. The government mitigated the difficulties of farmers through various drought relief measures. Farmers who had subscribed for crop insurance would be compensated by more than Rs. 120 crore for failure in yield.

17. Availability of inputs at affordable prices and adequate infrastructure for marketing the produce are the keys to success in agriculture. Honourable Members have time and again emphasised the availability of timely and cheap credit to farmers. I share their concern.

18. One of the reasons of the high cost of credit is the hierarchical structure of co-operative credit institutions. Reducing the layers in this structure is an obvious remedy. As a pilot project to start with, in fifteen districts of the State, the Apex Bank would directly lend to the primary co-operative credit societies and to farmers' Self Help Groups, thereby reducing the interest charged to the farmer by about two to three percent. My endeavour is to ensure that for short term agricultural credit the interest rate does not exceed 9 percent. Necessary changes to the rural credit structure would be carried out towards this end. If this experiment succeeds, we would apply it across the state. This would pave the way for the much larger task of overhauling the co-operative credit system.

19. I propose to abolish sales tax on sprinklers and drip irrigation equipment.

20. Another critical concern of the farmer is to obtain remunerative prices for his produce. My government launched the market intervention scheme on a massive scale, which lent support to the farmers. During the current year, the Government released Rs.125 crore from the revolving fund and provided price support for maize, ragi, paddy and ball copra. Areca nut, which is susceptible to price variation, would be included in the scheme with support from Government of India.

21. Sir, the face of commodity markets has changed beyond recognition all over the world. Technology has reduced distances and extended markets. Our markets have to modernise and take advantage of the trading in futures and forwards in all agricultural commodities. We would watch these developments to ensure that Karnataka is in readiness to reap their advantages.

22. My government emphasises that Agricultural Produce Marketing Committees have to operate efficiently and ensure that the farmer gets the sale amount without delay and harassment. No laxity on this count will be allowed. Any problem faced by farmers will be addressed expeditiously.

23. Closely related to modernisation of markets is augmenting of storage facilities. I propose to address this by undertaking the construction of one warehouse in each taluk and four multi-grain silos at Gulbarga, Gokak, Shimoga and Hubli. The private sector would be invited to participate in this venture.

24. I have dwelt upon the inevitability of globalisation in the present day

world. If our farmer has to prosper, he has to look at the global market. Export of agricultural produce has to pick up. And this is unlikely to happen if we do not adhere to the standards set by the international community. As a step in this direction, I propose to establish three pesticide residue testing laboratories in the State : at Bangalore, Dharwad and Bellary.

25. Realising the importance of pulses, the government has established the Karnataka Togari Abhivruddhi Mandali Niyamita. This board would address the problems of tur and other pulses as well. I am allocating Rs.5 crore towards the share capital of this corporation.

26. My government proposes to improve the productivity of rice by promoting hybrid rice cultivation in a mission mode, as suggested by the Agriculture Commission.

27. Contract farming may emerge as a solution to the problem of forward linkages in agriculture. A contract farming unit is already in operation in the Department of Agriculture. In view of the increasing importance of food processing industries, this unit would raise the awareness of farmers and extend contract farming facility for a large number of crops.

28. Raitha Samparka Kendras have been well received by farmers. They have distributed over Rs. 12 crore of seeds to farmers in the current year. In the next 12 months, they will become the hub to provide extension services in agriculture and horticulture, animal husbandry and sericulture. The kendras will have links to Bhoomi, APMCs and the Agriculture Universities, so as to meet all the requirements of farmers under one roof. This is a pioneering effort in the country and is a major step towards taking Information Technology to rural areas. We have requested the National Institute of Design to provide a design for the kendras.

29. Karnataka has the second largest arid zone in the country. Under a Rs. 690 crore World Bank project, water-shed development of 61,882 hectares is proposed, at a cost of Rs. 100 crore. Another 50,000 hectares would be developed in 2002-03 with financial assistance from NABARD.

30. Israeli technology in water management and commercial crop rotation will be taken up on

experimental basis in two farms in the State. I propose an outlay of Rs. 3 crore for this purpose.

31. The Agricultural Universities will continue various research activities for the benefit of farmers, including research on coconut mite, biotechnology, integrated pest and disease management etc. It is proposed to start Krishi Vignana Kendras in all uncovered districts. Cropping practices, transfer of technology and other information would be available through distance education. I am increasing the total allocation for Agricultural Universities from Rs.87.40 crore to Rs.107.06 crore.

32. A little less than one-sixth of the total cultivable area of the state is under horticultural crops. Karnataka has ten different agro climatic zones that offer immense potential for horticulture.

33. An intensive training programme, Grama Thotagarike, would be launched, initially in select districts. Anganwadis, Self Help Groups and farmers' organisations would be involved in this programme.

34. Animal husbandry is another source of income in rural areas. Towards that end the State Government has established animal disease diagnostic laboratories at the district level during the current year. These have proved to be very useful. I therefore intend to extend similar facilities at the taluk level in a phased manner. Fifty selected taluks will get this facility in the coming year. A sum of Rs.2.50 crore has been allocated for this purpose.

35. In order to augment the production of quality fish seed, modernisation of fish production and rearing farms will be taken up at an estimated cost of Rs.9.78 crore under a NABARD assisted RIDF project.

36. The existing scheme of sales tax exemption for the diesel supplied to fishermen shall be continued in the coming year.

37. My government has accorded the highest priority for creation of irrigation potential as the core agrarian infrastructure. I propose a plan outlay of Rs.2790 crore for irrigation, which is about 32 percent of the State's plan.

38. In the current year we had planned to bring 3.85 lakh acres under irrigation through KBJNL and KNNL. As against this, about 2.80 lakh acres have been brought under irrigation. In the coming year we plan to provide irrigation to an extent of 6 lakh acres.

39. Irrigation projects of the Cauvery basin are of critical importance to our state. Rs.300 crore have been earmarked for the projects in this basin.

40. Dudhganga, an inter-State irrigation project, has been lingering for quite some time. We have concluded an agreement with Maharashtra and a sum of Rs.35 crore has been paid. We now have the right to utilise 4 TMCs of water. The project will commence soon.

41. The late, Sri S. Nijalingappa had a dream of providing water to the parched areas of Chitradurga

and Tumkur districts. I propose to investigate various possibilities of implementing this project. The investigation would be completed within six months. And should it be feasible, the work would be taken up.

42. During 2001-02 the Hirehalla Project, Indi Branch canal (from 64 Km to 133 Km) under the Upper Krishna Project, and Halli Mysore lift irrigation scheme were dedicated to the nation. Prestigious projects like Almatti dam, Bennithora, Lower Mullamari, Chulkinala, Maskinala and Narayanapura Right Bank canal would be completed in 2002-03.

43. The Government is committed to involve farmers in water management. In this direction, 1350 Water Users' Co-operative Societies have been registered so far and Memoranda of Understanding have been entered into with 220 societies. During 2002-03, I intend completing this process.

44. The irrigation department has introduced on-line e-tendering, a pioneering effort in the country. This would make the tendering process transparent and competitive.

45. Hon'ble Members would be pleased to know that Karnataka received Rs. 450 crore under the Accelerated Irrigation Benefit Programme in the current year. I am confident of receiving a higher outlay from Government of India in the coming year.

46. Jala Samvardhane Yojane Sangha (JSYS), a registered society, has been formed for desilting and repairing 5000 village tanks over a period of five years at a cost of Rs.1000 crore with community involvement.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT, SOCIAL WELFARE AND EMPLOYMENT

47. With our stated vision of decentralisation, we must make every effort to empower Grama Panchayats. Henceforth, the revenue realised from village tanks would accrue to them. Further, disbursement of untied funds would be linked to the additional resources mobilised by Grama Panchayats through taxation and other means. I hope this would enthuse them to mobilise resources.

48. I propose to set up a Rural Development Advisory Board for better co-ordination between various agencies implementing these programmes.

49. In order to build capacities in the local government institutions I propose to increase the scope of training activities of the Abdul Nazir Sab State Institute of Rural Development (ANSSIRD) and make it the nodal agency for such activities. 1000 Grama Panchayats will move over to a modern accounting system which will be compliant with state accounting norms. The ANSSIRD will play a pivotal role in the development and dissemination of training material for this activity.

50. The Sampoorna Grameena Rozgar Yojane (SGRY) enables Panchayat Raj institutions to take up employment oriented schemes and create durable assets in rural areas. Of the Rs. 289 crore we plan to

spend during 2002-03 under this programme, half will be in the form of free rice and wheat supplied by the Government of India. Out of the remaining Rs.144 crore of cash support, Government of India would provide Rs.110 crore. The State's share will be Rs.34 crore. Depending on the response to this scheme we will increase the allocation.

51. This initiative will go a long way in bringing much needed employment opportunities for landless labourers, while at the same time strengthening the effectiveness of the Panchayat Raj Institutions.

52. Priority areas such as enhancing ground water recharge and rain water harvesting through watershed development and construction of layouts under the Navagrama Programme will be included under SGRY.

53. Grossly inadequate maintenance of rural roads is a serious problem. There are about 1,04,000 kms of rural roads coming under Panchayat Raj bodies. I propose to streamline road maintenance by preparing an Action Plan and pooling resources from all quarters, which would result in an outlay of Re.1 crore per taluka.

54. The successful Rural Development and Self Employment Training Institutes (RUDSETI) model of entrepreneurial training provided by banks themselves was first started in Karnataka. My government believes that this can be a powerful way for government to work in collaboration with financial institutions.

55. I am announcing a novel programme for the setting up of RUDSETIs in areas where a Legislator commits funds from the Legislators' Area Development Fund. While these RUDSETIs will be set up and run by banks, a compensation incentive of upto Rs. 40 lakh per RUDSETI will be given, based on the number of loans given to successful trainees out of the Legislators' Area Development Fund.

56. I appeal to the Hon'ble Legislators to implement this scheme. Government will render administrative support in this endeavour.

57. I believe that this partnership will give a new direction for the release of credit into the rural sector, where the role of the government is to help the banks create credit-worthy customers, rather than subsidise the loans.

58. My government is committed to the upliftment of the depressed sections of the society. Equipping them for gainful employment is critical. It is proposed to train 25,000 unemployed SC and ST youth in various vocational courses in ITIs. During the next financial year, 2,000 educated unemployed youth will be imparted computer training.

59. Special efforts will be made for improving infrastructural facilities in hostels. In addition to completing 172 hostel buildings which are under progress, new buildings will be taken up during 2002-03.

60. A special court will be set up for trial of cases under the Prevention of Atrocities Act, 1989 to ensure speedy disposal of cases.

61. The Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes Development Corporation will take up a programme of rehabilitation of Safai Karmacharis, with grants from Government of India.

62. Infrastructure development in tribal areas will get priority during the next financial year. Housing, Education and Minor Irrigation will receive special focus under the Tribal Sub Plan. In order to improve medical facilities, mobile clinics will be provided in a phased manner. Improving literacy levels of tribal girls and encouraging tribal girl students to continue their education would receive attention.

63. In order to improve the literacy levels of Backward Classes, another 140 hostels will be taken up for construction. The Karnataka Backward Classes Development Corporation will double the number of beneficiaries under the micro-credit programme for women who form Self Help Groups.

64. It is planned to take up Construction of 36 Morarji Desai Residential Schools through the Karnataka Residential Educational Institutions Society (KREIS) for the benefit of SC, ST, BC and minorities. A HUDCO loan of Rs. 72 crore will be utilised for this purpose.

65. The Karnataka Minorities Development Corporation will assist 10,000 beneficiaries under its loan programmes. I also propose to double the allocation to the Wakf institutions to Rs.12 crore in 2002-03. These institutions should spend a part of the increased outlay for creating burial ground facilities. I propose construction of a Haj building. To start with, a sum of Rs.3 crores is provided for that.

66. The Stree Shakti programme has been a success. As Members might recall, my government targeted the formation of 50,000 groups in 2001-02. The actual performance has been the formation of 74512 groups covering 10,88,838 women. As against a savings of Rs. 5 crore that I had indicated in the last budget, these groups have saved an amount of Rs.40.49 crore. Rs. 21 crore has been released for training and for the revolving fund. We would continue to concentrate our efforts on this movement, so as to maximise the benefits to these groups by ensuring that they avail a minimum of Rs. 100 crore of micro credit from the banking sector in the next financial year.

67. Nutrition of the child is of the utmost priority. I propose a scheme to supply milk through the KMF to children in the age group of 0-3 years in Anganwadi centres, in addition to rice preparation and energy food.

68. All eligible girl students of educationally backward districts of Gulbarga Bidar, Raichur, Bijapur, Koppal, Bagalkot and Bellary will be covered under the scholarship scheme.

69. Housing has been considered only as a welfare measure so far. But my government gives importance to housing as an engine of economic growth. Housing

can give a boost to the demand for products of several industries like steel, cement, electrical goods, sanitaryware etc., besides creating direct and indirect employment. The Task Force on Housing set up by the Government has made a number of recommendations to liberalise this sector to facilitate greater private investment. Keeping these factors in view, the State Government will shortly announce a comprehensive Housing Policy, emphasising Housing for All as the objective. The government will carry out legislative changes to lift the restrictions on purchase of agricultural land for housing purposes.

70. The Government reiterates its commitment to build 11 lakh houses for the houseless poor in the state. The Rajiv Gandhi Rural Housing Corporation has already completed 2.78 lakh houses. A total subsidy of Rs.178 crore has been released in the current year for Ashraya and Ambedkar housing schemes.

71. In the next year, 2 lakh houses for the weaker sections would be taken up. I propose to provide 1 lakh houses for SC and ST beneficiaries every year. Towards this end, as against the existing norm of 30 percent, half the Rural Ashraya houses would be allotted to beneficiaries from these communities. By this measure, in 3 years, I hope to provide a house to every houseless SC and ST family in the State.

72. Grama Panchayats would be actively involved in the implementation of the housing programmes. It is proposed that 40 percent of the houses to be built would be administered by Grama Panchayats. They would organise regular savings schemes for the rural poor as a prelude to assistance. Recovery of the housing loans will also be rationalised to reduce the repayment burden.

73. To prevent the unwieldy growth of cities, it is necessary to develop small towns. In a new programme, the Chief Minister's Model Towns Housing Programme, residential layouts in small towns with growth potential would be developed. The Karnataka Housing Board in association with local bodies would undertake this programme on self financing basis.

74. The Karnataka Housing Board would focus on creation of new income generating assets for Government and local bodies. Construction of district office complexes, mini Vidhana Soudhas, creation of rental housing stock and land reserves would be taken up by the Board.

75. The Karnataka Slum Clearance Board is carrying out the Nirmala Jyothi Yojane, which is expected to benefit over 15 lakh slum dwellers in 21 cities across the state. The Board has also taken up construction of 10,312 houses under the Centrally sponsored Valmiki Ambedkar Awaas Yojana (VAMBAY) at a cost of Rs. 57.65 crore and is providing 383 community toilets under the Nirmal Bharath Abhiyan (NBA) at a cost of Rs.18.54 crore.

SERVICES: HEALTH, EDUCATION AND CIVIC AMENITIES

76. I propose to set up an advisory board on Nature Cure and Yoga to give due importance to alternative systems of medicine.

77. I also propose to set up Rogi Kalyan Samitis for government hospitals. This would make them independent in functioning and enable them to receive contributions and utilise them with less bureaucratic control.

78. I propose establishment of a Cath Lab at the Government Hospital in Hubli. This would serve the citizens of North Karnataka.

79. Karnataka remained free from polio during this year. We are on the verge of eradicating polio from the state. This was possible due to the efforts put in by the Government through the Pulse Polio Immunisation campaigns.

80. Our next target is Tuberculosis. Ten more districts would be covered under the Revised National Tuberculosis Control Programme (RNTCP).

81. HIV and AIDS continue to be a cause of concern. A multi-pronged approach is necessary to contain it. I propose to redouble our efforts for its prevention and control. The State intends to approach National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO) to double the investment in the HIV and AIDS prevention programme to Rs.20 crore during 2002-03. We shall launch a campaign to enhance public awareness of AIDS.

82. We are committed to providing a higher investment for health according to the recommendations of the Task Force on Health and Family Welfare. A Rs.875 crore project has been proposed to the World Bank and it is in the final stages of approval.

83. Education is the basis of development. My Government is committed to accord the highest priority to education. Towards that end, after absorbing certain recurring expenditure under non-plan, I propose to substantially increase the outlay on Education.

84. During the current year, major initiatives taken up by my government, like Chinnara Angala, Dattu Yojane, Jana Mechchida Shikshaka, Sarva Shikshan Abhiyan and Samadayadatta Shale have been implemented. In the next financial year, I propose to consolidate the gains achieved during the last two years by establishing centres of scientific excellence in select Government Schools; extend the scheme of providing free uniforms to all students studying in government schools up to class VII; and take steps to bring the educationally backward talukas on par with other parts of the state. We have launched the mid-day meal programme in seven backward districts. I am allocating Rs.45 crore for this programme.

85. Effective implementation of Sarva Shikshna Abhiyan would be ensured with community involvement. We are expecting Rs.75 crore from the Government of India for this programme. The State's share will be provided.

86. A comprehensive review of the grant in aid system would be taken up. This

is overdue.

87. Construction of new college buildings and addition of rooms would be taken up by raising resources from financial institutions. Upgrading of computing facilities in colleges will be carried out with the help of the private sector. Capacity building of faculty will also be taken up through in-service training.

88. A Valmiki Adhyayana Peetha will be set up in the Kannada University at Hampi. I am earmarking Rs.15 lakh for this purpose.

89. I propose to institute a chair in Dharwad University in the name of Smt. Gangubai Hangal.

90. I propose a chair in the name of the late, Sri K.H. Patil for studies in co-operative movement in the State.

91. With a Biotechnology Park being established in Bangalore, the resulting demand for trained graduates is proposed to be met by introducing biotechnology courses in more government colleges.

92. As a measure to create scientific temper among our students and to instill a spirit of rational enquiry, I propose to set up a Science City in Dharwad. I am allocating Rs.20 lakh for project formulation.

93. As I had indicated in my last budget speech, Jal Nirmal, the World Bank aided Rural Water Supply and Sanitation Project has been launched. This would be implemented in eleven districts of the northern region of the State with an outlay of Rs.1035 crore. The project envisages a community contribution of Rs.224 crore over a period of six years. I appeal to the Hon'ble Members to motivate people to come forward to contribute for the implementation of the scheme. I am earmarking Rs. 61 crore for this project.

94. To meet the growing demand for water in Bangalore City, the CWSS IV Stage, Phase-I, with financial assistance from the Japan Bank of International Co-operation is under implementation. This would bring in an additional 270 MLD water to the City by June 2002.

95. Under the Indo-French Protocol, the BWSSB has taken up construction of tertiary sewage treatment plants in the Vrishabhavati Valley and at Yelhanka. The treated non-potable water will be supplied to industries and the proposed international airport at Devanahalli.

96. The Karnataka Urban Water Supply and Drainage Board is implementing 72 ongoing water supply schemes and 7 under ground drainage schemes at an estimated cost of Rs.798.52 crore. During 2002-03, it is proposed to commission 25 water supply schemes.

97. Over the years, investment required for water supply schemes has increased. Operation and maintenance costs have also gone up. Future water supply schemes would require resources of enormous

magnitude, calling for a re-look at the finances of this sector. Levy and collection of user charges would become imperative. While my government would protect the interests of the poor, the relatively well-to-do have to shoulder this burden. Towards this end, I propose to frame a comprehensive water policy.

98. In the last two years, the Bangalore Development Authority has formed and distributed 25,000 sites as against just 3,400 sites in the last 10 years. The BDA will continue to meet the growing demand of the public and at the same time ensure that orderly and planned layouts come up in the city. Issue of Absolute Sale Deeds through Sale Deed Samaveshas is another innovative measure of the BDA. In the last two years, 26,000 Absolute Sale Deeds have been issued.

99. In view of its healthy financial position, out of its own resources, the BDA will take up infrastructure works to the tune of Rs.150 crore in Bangalore city over the next two years.

100. To improve delivery of services to citizens, computerisation would be extended to important Regional Transport Offices in the State under the Eleventh Finance Commission Grants. To effectively check and control air pollution caused by vehicles the number of Parisara Vaahinis would be increased. I have more to say on this in the second part of my speech.

101. The Supreme Court had directed phasing out of old vehicles in Delhi. Bangalore faces a similar threat. In order to reduce pollution and age related accidents, no transport vehicle that is older than 15 years would be allowed to ply within the metropolitan area of Bangalore.

102. During 2002-03 passenger facilities would be augmented by constructing new depots, toilet facilities and bus stands in various parts of the State. Over 2000 new buses would be inducted into the fleet. The KSRTC would provide reservation system through the Internet, besides engaging private agents.

103. Computerisation of ration cards taken up in Bailhongal taluk of Belgaum district was a success. Over 13,000 bogus ration cards have been eliminated resulting in a saving of about Rs.1 crore in food subsidy. A similar exercise undertaken in the Bangalore Informal Rationing Area is expected to detect two lakh bogus ration cards. Such measures would go a long way in keeping the food subsidy burden under control and also ensuring that the needy are not deprived of their due.

104. Kerosene coupons have been printed for distribution to APL and BPL families in the Informal Rationing Area and urban areas. In Bangalore city, food coupons and kerosene coupons were distributed along with computerised ration cards and have gone a long way in reducing misuse. Now, it is proposed to distribute food coupons to BPL families in a wider manner to ensure better targeting of subsidies.

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