

# Overview and Problems of Belagavi District Tourism

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## **Abstract**

Belagavi district is historically and naturally prosperous, which has ample opportunities to develop tourism activities in the district. The tourism industry can boost the growth of Belagavi in many areas such as transportation, hotels and accommodations, local businesses, and various self-employment opportunities. Historical monuments, old temples, forts, waterfalls, rivers, natural mountains, etc., are creating a good atmosphere to develop the tourism sector. Less awareness, proper transportation, security issues, basic infrastructure, and fewer initiatives by local bodies and the government are hindering the growth of the tourism industry. With the help of available resources, proper planning, developing sustainable tourism, collaborative participation, worthy investments, and a skilled and creative surrounding environment, development will help to enhance tourism in the district. The growth of the tourism sector helps to develop other service sectors and employment opportunities.

## **Introduction**

Tourism is a major source of income for many countries which helps the growth economy of a country. Recent days many countries are trying to develop positive environments, facilities, and policies for the development of tourism activities. Tourism development and urbanization have economic, socio-cultural, and environmental impacts on host destinations. Belagavi district is the biggest district of the Karnataka state, which is historically rich in heritages, has very old monuments, it is naturally prosperous, and has many areas to develop tourism activities.

Belagavi district, which connects Goa and Maharashtra states, has potential to develop the tourism sector. Very good road, rail, and air transportation connectivity are providing the right ample to reach tourists. Lack of interest, less initiatives, planning, facilities, and security issues are hindering the growth of the tourism industry in Belagavi District. Support from the government and local authorities is crucial for the development of tourism activities in the Belagavi district. Tourism industry development can boost transportation, hotels and accommodations, local businesses, and various employment opportunities etc.

## **Review of Literature**

Belagavi (formerly known as Belgaum) is a historical and strategically located district in the northern part of Karnataka, India. The tourism industry in Belagavi has garnered attention in recent years due to its rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and proximity to important tourist destinations in the Western Ghats and Maharashtra. The review of literature focuses on various aspects of tourism in Belagavi, including its potential, challenges, historical significance, and economic impact.

1. Chandrashekhar and Desai (2015) highlighted Belagavi's historical and religious sites like Belagavi Fort and Kamal Basti as vital tourism attractions. They stressed the need to understand and promote the district's cultural and historical heritage for tourism development.
2. Patil et al. (2018) emphasized Belagavi's unique blend of Hindu, Muslim, Christian, and Jain influences. They noted that Belagavi's proximity to Goa offers potential for expanding tourism commercially through heritage sites.
3. Joshi et al. (2020) focused on ecotourism and nature-based tourism like birdwatching and rock climbing. The study promoted sustainable tourism development to preserve natural resources.
4. Shastri and Ramesh (2019) analyzed tourism's economic impact on local communities over two decades. They highlighted employment growth, increased business opportunities, and infrastructure development from tourism. Tourism has boosted local industries like hospitality, transport, and retail.
5. Ghosh (2020) pointed out the unequal distribution of tourism benefits across rural and urban areas. Rural areas lack infrastructure, which limits their tourism potential and economic gains. Ghosh recommended infrastructure improvement to promote equitable tourism growth.
6. Rao (2021) raised concerns over environmental degradation due to increased tourist influx. He cited issues like waste, pollution, and biodiversity loss in places like Gokak Falls and Bhimgad Sanctuary.
7. Sharma (2023) suggested diversifying Belagavi's tourism through niche markets like medical tourism, agro-tourism, and rural stays.

### Need of the Study

Tourism is one of the key aspects to generate revenue for the district and overall in the state. It helps to increase employment and business opportunities in the district. The tourism industry is one of the contributors towards the growth of GDP in general, with the hotel and transportation sectors making indirect contributions to the economy at large. The tourism industry is providing a very good number of direct and indirect employment opportunities. Tourism is the major service industry in India, which contributed INR 19.13 trillion to the country's GDP in 2023, with the national GDP contribution being over 10%, which was 8% in the year 2019. This industry provided almost 43 million overall employments. India witnessed more than 9.24 million annual overseas tourist arrivals. The World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) projected that GDP contribution might achieve INR 21.15 trillion in 2024 and INR 43.25 trillion by 2034.<sup>1</sup>

This study is undertaken in Belagavi district, which has many opportunities to develop tourism activities. The tourism industry can directly and indirectly contribute to the growth of other sectors in the district. Therefore, there is a need for the study that shows the tourism places in the Belagavi district, the problems that it is facing, and suggestion for the growth of tourism industry.

### Objectives of the Study

1. To Know and provide information about the tourism places in Belagavi District
2. To understand the problems of tourism in Belagavi District
3. To offer the suggestions based on findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Press information Bureau, GOI, 03-10-2024

### Limitation of the Study

1. This study is limited to Belagavi District only.
2. This study is limited to selected tourist places only.
3. The study is limited to secondary data and personal communication with local people and tourists at tourist places.

### Research Methodology

The research methodology followed for the study is descriptive in nature.

### Research Area:

The area of this research is limited to selected tourist places in the Belagavi district of Karnataka state.

### Sources of Data

1. **Primary data:** The primary data has been collected with the help of personal visits, archeology department writings, and proofs. Some data like problems of particular area and suggestions for improvements were collected through communication with local people as well as tourists' in a particular place at the time of the visit.
2. **Secondary data:** The secondary data has been collected from various sources like websites, Belagavi District at a Glance, local magazines, newspapers, journals, and publications.

### Tourist Places in Belagavi District

**Belagavi district** has now become one of the important and considered districts in the state of Karnataka. Belagavi is currently marching with a tag of a fast-growing and redeveloping district. Belagavi is exactly at the midpoint between Mumbai and Bangalore.<sup>2</sup> Belagavi district has 13,433 square kilometers of area with different cultures. Reach culture, historical, monumental, spiritual, natural, and commercial places are the attractions in the district. Some of the famous places are referenced as below.

1. **Kittur Rani Channamma Joo and Nisargadhama, Bhootaramanahatti, Belagavi:** Mini Zoo was established in the year 1989 at Bhutramanahatti. This place is one of the famous picnic spots for kids and families. Various animals, a green environment, and kids playing instruments are the attractions in the garden.
2. **Durgadevi Temple and Fort, Belagavi:** Belagavi It is very close to Central and the city bus station. Can see Dugadevi temple and Ramakrishna Ashram inside the fort. The fort itself is located on several acres.
3. **Kamal Basti, Belagavi:** Amazing Jain Basadi with great architecture and very well maintained. The Murty of Tirtgankara is situated in the temple. It was a rock temple, and the pillars are nicely carved. Once upon a time a celebrated seat of Jain philosophy, Belgaum is a gateway of temples that paints a story about ancient dynasties. Kamal Basadi is one such relic old monument that was built in the early 12th century during the Ratta Dynasty.
4. **Lakeview and Boating, Belagavi:** Also called Kote Kere, which is one of the picnic spots in the center of the city. It is situated in the heart of the city; it offers greenery & walkways, boating, and kids playing instruments as well.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://belagavi.nic.in/en/>

5. **Shree Ramakrishha Mission Ashram, Belagavi:** Swami Vivekananda visited this place and stayed for a few days in 1892. The place has elegance and a very peaceful and calm atmosphere. A huge complex having a small demonstration space, a book stall, and a huge meditation hall.
6. **Veer Soudha (Mahatma Gandhiji's visited place) and Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj Garden, Belagavi:** Veer Soudha was raised in the remembrance of Gandhiji and the historic 39th National Congress Session, which was held in 1924 at Belgaum. This was the only session where Mahatma Gandhiji participated as the session's president. The Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj statue and garden is another place next to Veer Soudha with a well-maintained green garden, a walkers' way, an open gym, and sitting arrangements, which is easily reachable for surrounding people.
7. **Military Mahadeva Temple and Chatrapathi Shivaji Maharaj Empire Amusement Park, Belagavi:** Military Mahadeva Temple is in the purview of the Maratha Light Infantry Regiment, Belagavi. Close to the railway station, there is sufficient car parking, a fine-maintained small amusement park, and plentiful space for children to play in this place.
8. **The St. Mary's Church:** It is one of the oldest churches in the Belagavi city, which is situated in the Camp area. It is a custom-built Catholic church by the British in the year 1869. It has glass paneling with the windows and murals depicting the living of Christ. The walls have gothic red windows, and it was built using similar materials as those used in building the Victoria Terminus in Mumbai.
9. **Suvarna Vidhana Soudha, Belagavi:** This Golden Legislative House was inaugurated in the year 2012. It is constructed in the village of Halaga and is an alternative to Vidhan Souda in Bengaluru. This place is not open to the public all the time except for a few special occasions.
10. **Rakaskop Dam, Rakaskop, Belagavi:** It was built in 1960 and was one of the water sources for Belagavi for many years. The length of the dam is 1175 feet, and the maximum height is 36.16 feet. It is situated across the Markandeya River. The dam is a well-known picnic spot for local people and travelers, which has beautiful scenery and Lord Shiva at the top level.
11. **Rajhansgad Fort and Natural View, Rajhansgad, Belagavi:** Yellurgad (Yellur Fort) is located within the surrounding area of Belgaum Taluka, on a hillock with a breathtaking sight. It is situated nearly 2,500 ft (762 m) above sea level. According to sources, this fort dates back to history many centuries ago among different kingdoms and their rulers, including the Yadavas, Hoysalas, Bahamani, Adilshahi, and Peshwas-Marathas. The fort on the peak of the hill is observable from almost all areas of Belgaum.
12. **Jamboti Hills, Khanapur:** Jamboti Hills from Belgaum are absolute beauty. The road is travelled through the flourishing green forests, and the attractiveness of rains in monsoon is an enjoyment. It's green everywhere, and one can drive to the border of Karnataka-Goa with ease, and all along what you find is greenery. It is a very interesting place for nature lovers. Forests are spread wide across and rivers also flow across.
13. **Vajra Falls, Khanapur:** The beauty of mighty water flowing with full strength here reminds us of the power of nature. The sound of water mixes with the voice of birds and creates a magical effect at this place. Situated in the reserve forests of the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, one has to take permission before visiting the falls. Get the feel of a real jungle. The Mandovi River that flows to the beautiful falls from 200 m. The place is a popular trekking destination for travelers.
14. **Tilari Falls, Parawad falls, Sural falls. Mangeli falls, chorla view point, chigule nature view point-** These falls and nature viewpoints available in majestic ghats which are adorable for the

tourist in the Khanapur taluk. Nature trekking enthusiast people must visit these places between July to December.

15. **Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary, Khanapur:** It is situated in Khanapur taluk, Karnataka–Goa border. This place extended over 19,000 hectares; in the wildlife sanctuary, it is home to tigers, leopards, bears, chitals, deer, wild dogs, and other animals. Species like the Velvet-fronted Nuthatch, Malabargrey Hornbill, Imperial Pigeon, Emerald Dove, and the mysterious Malabar Trogon are staying in the beautiful place.
16. **Barapede Caves, Khanapur:** Natural caves known as the only breeding areas for dying out Wroughton's Free-tailed Bats, a vulnerable species on the border of disappearance.
17. **Bhimgad Fort, Khanapur:** Historical ruins of Bhimgad Fort are positioned within the Bhimgad Wildlife Sanctuary. Bhimgad Fort was constructed by Chatrapati Shivaji Maharaj during the 17th century and offered protection against the Portuguese military that occupied Goa. Bhimgad Fort has freshwater ponds, canons, and bulky walls that are realistically unbroken.
18. **Belgaum Golf Course:** A popular golf course in the region, located on the way to Bhimgad from Belagavi, opposite the Bhimgad Adventure Camp, a property owned by Jungle Lodges and Resorts.
19. **Bhuvareha Narasimha Temple, Halashi:** It is a place located in Khanapur taluk and 14 km away from Khanapur and 25 km away from Kittur. The earlier name of the temple is Palasika, and it was a center of the early Kadamba Dynasty. Later it was a minor capital of Goa Kadamba (980-1025).
20. **Kamala Narayana Temple, Degaon:** The village is most famous for this Kadamba-era temple, a unique dwikuta (modified trikuta) temple dedicated to Sri Kamala Narayana Swamy and Goddess Lakshmi. The temple is noted for its intricate carvings, including floral designs on the ceilings and walls, depictions of Krishnaleela, and erotic scenes.
21. **Kittur Rani Channamma Fort, Kittur:** Historic, the ruins of Kittur Fort take you back in time, reminding you of the struggles of Indian rulers of yore against the British. The surroundings are calm and filled with greenery. Rani Channamma, who was a wife of King Mallasarja Desai, is called one of the initial feminine rulers to have revolted against the British East India Company in 1824.
22. **Sangolli Rayanna Amusement park and garden, Sangolli:** It is situated in Sangolli of Bailhongle taluk. Sangolli Rayanna, who was a leading freedom fighter and right hand of Kittur Rani Channamma of Kittur territory. Sangolli Rayanna's freedom-fighting activities and struggle are presented in the amusement park. Sangolli Rayanna was hanged by the British in Chandagad of Khanapur taluk for the reason of Kittur freedom fighting.
23. **Kittur Rani Channamma Samadi and Garden, Bailhongal:** Kittur Rani Channamma was reserved in introverted imprisonment in the Bailhongal fort. She was denied access to basic facilities and passes away in 1829. This place offers a unique blend of learning and inspiration for visitors. Pleasant and peaceful atmosphere with well-maintained garden and sitting arrangements.
24. **Veera Rani Belawadi Mallamma, Belawadi:** Known as the brave warrior queen of Belawadi was from Bailhongal, Belgaum District was the first woman to form a women's army to fight against the British in the 17th century. She was the daughter of Sode King Madhulinga Nayaka. Few other historical monuments also available in this place. It is 15 KMs away from Bailhongal.
25. **Torgal Fort Ramadurg:** this is a rich history and stunning structural design fort which Surrounded by rocky hills on three sides and with the serene Malaprabha River flowing nearby, the fort's design indicates its strategic importance in times of conflict. Historically, Torgal Fort was ruled by nine

- generations of the Shindhe kings, with the last ruler, Narasojirao Shindhe, governing from 1932 until 1949. Some other old architecture also available in surrounding places.
26. **Mudakavi Fort Ramadurg:** Mudakavi Fort stands uniquely positioned on a hillock slope. The fort includes a lake which shows the complex gateway system connects to the lake through cleverly designed curved passages, demonstrating advanced medieval engineering and defensive architecture.
  27. **Yallamma Temple, Savadatti:** This temple was constructed in 1514 by bomappa Nayaka of Raybag. But, as per archaeological department evidence, it shows that this temple may have existed as early as the mid-11th century. This temple is a mixture of Chalukyan, Rashtrakuta, and Dravidian styles. Surrounded by very good hills, which overlook the Malaprapha River.
  28. **Renuka Sagar, or Malaprabha Dam, Naviluteerth, Savadatti:** this dam was built in 1974 for the Malaprabha River. It is distinguished as the shortest dam in Karnataka, with a height of 155 meters and a length of 41 meters, which is playing a vital function in managing water flow.
  29. **Savadatti Fort, Savadatti:** It is situated in the western part of Savadatti. This fort is a remarkable leftover from the 18th century that shows military arrangement, inventiveness, and unique structure with strategic location of the era. Savadatti is also called the Fragrant City and the Gateway to the History and Culture of Belagavi.<sup>3</sup>
  30. **Parasgad Fort, Savadatti:** The walls of this fort are simply called enormous because of its size. This fort provides an incomparable experience that was built in the 10th century by the Ratta dynasty. The fort is situated on the south side of Savadatti, alongside a hill that is almost vertical with a deep canyon. Natural spring with a water tank called Ramatheertha, steps to reach Yadravi village, a cave housing statues of idols and mythological legendaries are found in this place.
  31. **Someshwara Temple, Sogal:** This religious, historic, scenic, and waterfall place is located in Savadatti Taluk. This temple is constructed from Rashtrakuta times, and it has a main square hall, cylindrical and octagonal pillars. Entrance steps to reach the temple, a few other temples, 18-meter-tall falls, a small zoo for wildlife, caves, beautiful scenery, a marriage hall, and a spacious place for kids to play are the desirability of this place.
  32. **Panchalingeshwara Temple, Hooli:** It is located 8-9 km away from the Savadatti bus stop. A very nicely structured temple is to be seen by people. It is under the control of the Archaeological Department of India. This temple was built up of stones that are incredibly cool even in the middle of the summer.
  33. **Gokak Falls, Gokak:** A mesmerizing waterfall that is easy to access. Beautiful scenery along the river is the main attraction of the place. Ancient temples and gardens near the falls are other places to spend time for visitors. Ghataprabha river water reaches here after flowing from Hidkal Dam. The hydroelectric power plant was constructed by Forbes Gokak Spinning Mill, which was established in 1887 for the same falls.
  34. **Godachinmalaki Waterfalls:** It is also called Markandeya Falls, as it is placed on the Markandeya River. It is really situated 2.5 km away from Godachinmalaki village which is reachable from walkable farm and forest road. The large open valley, smog forming thunderous waterfall makes visitors enjoy the spot.

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<sup>3</sup> [belagavitourism.com](http://belagavitourism.com)

35. **Raja Lakhamagouda Dam (Hidkal Dam):** Very good garden, nurseries, outside scenic view of backwater of dam, sunset and sunrise views, and the surrounding environment are the beauty of this place. This dam is across the Ghataprabha River in Hidkal village.

### Findings of the Study Related to Problems

Most of the tourists were dissatisfied with the efforts made by the government to develop some historic and tourist places. Even the government has undertaken initiation to develop some tourist places, but that is not up to the mark. The major finding of the study was as follows.

1. **Limited Awareness:** Many tourist spots in the Belagavi District are not known to the tourist people. Because of less awareness, people have not visited a few places of the district. Lack of Proper and authenticated information also leading factor for less awareness.
2. **Transportation Problem:** Many tourist places are severely facing the problem of transportation, which is inconvenient for tourists to visit these places. Few places have private vehicles available, but that is very limited.
3. **Non-availability of information:** The majority of the historic places of Belagavi district are situated in the interior area. Easily and properly information is not available for tourists to visit those places.
4. **Shortages of tourist guides/trained manpower:** Tourist guides are not available to guide and provide information about tourist places, which can be inconvenient for tourists visiting.
5. **Shortage of tourist-friendly infrastructure:** Infrastructure means structures, facilities, and other systems that contribute to the growth of tourist activities. Facilities include buildings, proper roads, bridges, power supplies, transportation, safety, water and sanitation, telecommunication, and more. When these infrastructures are not operating properly, then tourist activities will not develop.
6. **Lack of Government Initiatives:** Operational constraints include lack of access to information, lack of efficient decision-making structures, lack of discussion platforms, lack of knowledge, and lack of transparency and accountability. Structural constraints identified include lack of access to planning experts, weak community development programs, lack of budget, lack of education, and unsuitable policy and governance, which are also affecting the growth of Belagavi district tourism.
7. **Negligence of Local Governing Bodies:** Local authorities have crucial roles to reduce tourism's negative impacts. There is a communication gap in tourism planning; the involvement of collaboration between the public and private sectors is a central concern of tourism management to enhance the destination's attractiveness. Therefore, the contribution of various local bodies in tourism development is very low in Belagavi tourism places.
8. **Safety and security concerns:** Safety issues are another problem of tourism growth in the district. Except for a few places, the majority of places do not have security personnel in tourist places. This is another reason for people who are hesitating to visit particular places: harassment, violence, laws, etc.
9. **Improper maintenance:** The majority of the tourist places are not properly maintained. Cleanliness is totally neglected in many places, and few places are not maintained well. Plastics, bottles, dust, unwanted grass, sludge, stones, and unwanted art by a few people are common in many places.
10. **Agricultural tourism is neglected:** Many places in Belagavi have a scope for the development of agricultural tourism. But there is no appropriate initiation taken by farmers as well as the government. Belagavi is famous for many vegetables, sugarcane, cotton, and other crops that have opportunities in agricultural tourism.

- 11. Home stays and creative activities do not exist:** This is a major problem for Belagavi District tourism development. Less-cost homestays and fun and enjoyable creativities are in shortage in the tourism places. If creative activities are available in nearby tourism places, after that, people can spend their time in those activities after visiting nearby places.
- 12. Short-time visiting places:** The tourism places of Belagavi are short-time visiting places. Except for a few places, tourists can spend a maximum of two to three hours in a particular tourist place. This poses a problem to visitors; again, they have to move to the next place to spend the remaining time of the day.
- 13. Less participation of local community:** List involvement of local community is probably the only legitimate and moral stakeholder in tourism development. Local people are not initiating any activities to boost tourism, which can be a drawback.
- 14. Inadequate marketing and promotion:** There is not much marketing and promotion initiative taken by the tourism department. Posters, stickers, slideshows of famous places, advertisements and publicity etc., are neglected in the district. This is also one of the reasons for the lack of information and awareness.
- 15. Seasonal in nature:** Tourist places like Gokak Falls, Godachinamalaki Falls, Renuka Sagar Dam, Naviluteerth, etc., are only seasonally available places. Especially in the rainy season, these places are adorable to visitors.

### Suggestions

Based on the above findings, the following suggestions are made.

- 1. Providing information:** It is very important that providing all the basic information to tourists is made aware of the places in the district. So, it is suggested that all basic information must be printed or published and made available to people.
- 2. Developing Basic Infrastructure:** Government and local bodies can work for the betterment of infrastructure development of tourism places. Good connecting roads, lodgings, bridges, water facilities, sanitation, parking facilities, gardens, and sitting arrangements can attract more tourists to those places.
- 3. Arrangement of hotels and food stalls:** It is necessary to arrange food facilities in the tourism places. The majority of tourism places do not have well-equipped and hygienic hotels. Providing available local tasty food and standard food facilities can be helpful to tourists to get the benefit.
- 4. Involvement of local community:** In some local communities, tourism can be a leading factor of overall expansion, so it is important that neighboring community creative and energetic involvement in tourism activities increase the benefits of tourism and minimize the negative impacts.
- 5. Initiatives by Local Governing Bodies:** Local authorities have crucial roles to reduce tourism's negative impacts and to increase the positive contribution of tourism business and consumption activity to local sustainable development (Richins, 2000).
- 6.** With the increasing attention given to communication in tourism planning, the involvement of collaboration between the public and private sectors is a central concern of tourism management to enhance the destination's attractiveness.
- 7.** With the collaboration of NGOs and various stakeholders, the government is needed to develop basic facilities for sustainable tourism development.

8. **PPP Initiatives:** emphasizing sustainable practices and community involvement. Collaboration between the government, private sector, and local communities is essential for ensuring tourism growth such area like trekking, home stay, resorts.
9. **Proper maintenance:** The majority of the tourism places are not properly maintained; therefore, it is suggested that all the tourist places must be properly maintained, as it is necessary to attract the tourists.
10. **Safety arrangements:** It is suggested that the government or local authorities must arrange the security that helps tourists to visit safely in that place.
11. **Tourism packages:** The tourism department and transport department need to develop more tourism packages to different tourism places. Different area packages could be helpful to visit all the places available in the district.
12. **Tourist Guides:** It is recommended that the government and local authorities must give the names of the tourist guides who are interested in guiding tourists. This could be helpful for outsiders to contact them for visiting different places to get guidance.
13. **Promotion and publicity:** Promotion and publicity tools such as posters, stickers, slideshows of famous places, advertisements on various vehicles, places etc., can boost tourism activities.
14. **Development of sustainable tourism:** with the aim of protecting future and surrounding environments, governments need to develop tourist places.

The tourism industry is very helpful in terms of increasing income, generating employment, and developing entrepreneurship. Tourism development will also be indirectly helpful for the overall growth of particular places.

## Conclusions

Belagavi is one district that has diversified opportunities for tourism development within it naturally. Few tourism areas are under the control of governments and agencies that are giving some facilities to tourists. Lack of knowledge, transportation, security, less community participation, and insufficient infrastructure are the major hurdles for the growth of the tourism sector in the district. The district has considerable potential to expand its tourism industry due to its exceptional mixture of cultural heritage, natural attractiveness, seasonal water sources, and historical perspective. On the other hand, the government and local authorities must address infrastructure issues; developing sustainable tourism, collaborative participation, worthy investments, and a skilled and creative surrounding environment will help to boost tourism in the district. Commercialization of tourism places could be helpful for the economic growth for locals, employment creation, and other business activities development.

Belagavi district is very close to many tourist places in Maharashtra and Goa, which can be helpful to tourists visiting those places as well. The development of tourism in the district has immense potential with addressing the issues.

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