

An Empirical Study Of Job Satisfaction Among Building Construction Workers In Palakkad District, Kerala

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Abstract

The construction sector plays a vital role in the economic development of Kerala, employing a large segment of the workforce. This study examines the level of job satisfaction among construction workers in Kerala, focusing on key factors such as workplace safety, overtime wages, working environment, and interpersonal relationships. The study is based on primary data collected from 200 construction workers, and statistical tools such as descriptive analysis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, Mann-Whitney U test, and Kruskal-Wallis test were employed. The findings indicate that workers are generally satisfied with overtime wage payments and relationships with employers and co-workers. However, only moderate satisfaction is observed in areas such as safety, hygiene, and overall working conditions. The demographic profile shows a predominantly male workforce with low educational levels and varied income groups. The study also reveals that job satisfaction significantly differs based on demographic factors like gender, age, education, and income. It highlights the need for improved working conditions and targeted welfare measures.

Keywords: Job Satisfaction, Construction Workers, Informal Sector, Labour Welfare.

Introduction

The construction industry is a vital contributor to economic growth and infrastructure development in India, providing employment to millions of workers, particularly from the informal sector. In Kerala, the sector has witnessed rapid expansion due to urbanization, migration, and increasing investment in infrastructure projects. Despite its importance, construction work is often characterized by physically demanding tasks, unsafe working conditions, irregular employment, and limited access to social security benefits. Although welfare mechanisms such as the Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board have been established to support workers, issues related to effective implementation, awareness, and accessibility continue to persist. These challenges significantly influence the level of job satisfaction among construction workers, making it an important area of study.

In the present context, job satisfaction has gained increased relevance as it directly affects worker productivity, well-being, and retention in the industry. Factors such as safety, wages, working environment, and interpersonal relationships play a crucial role in shaping workers' perceptions and attitudes. With the growing demand for skilled labour and the increasing reliance on migrant workers, understanding job satisfaction becomes essential for ensuring sustainable development in the construction sector. Looking ahead, improving job satisfaction through better policies, enhanced working conditions, and effective welfare measures can lead to a more stable and efficient workforce. Therefore, this study is significant in identifying key issues and providing insights for future policy interventions, particularly in districts like Palakkad.

Literature Reviews

A more recent study in Kerala by **Cineesh Thomas et al. (2025)** revealed that job satisfaction among construction workers is significantly influenced by income level, type of employment, and job stress. The study found that unskilled workers experience higher stress and lower satisfaction compared to skilled workers, highlighting inequality within the workforce.

A study by **Soundarya Priya and Anandh (2024)** focused on gender disparities in the construction industry and revealed that female workers face unequal pay, limited opportunities, and poor working conditions. The research emphasized that women are often excluded from skilled roles and face discrimination at construction sites, which affects their job satisfaction and participation in the sector.

Rotimi, Rotimi, Silva, Olatunji, & Ramanayaka, (2023) indicated that both remuneration and opportunities for knowledge enhancement and career advancement contribute positively to job satisfaction, whereas feelings of loneliness have a negative impact. Moreover, opportunities for knowledge development and career growth have a stronger influence on job satisfaction compared to remuneration.

From a Kerala perspective, studies such as those by **Sreedevi and Gopinath (2023)** reveal that despite relatively higher wage rates, workers experience dissatisfaction due to wage inequality, differences between migrant and local workers, and inconsistencies in employment conditions. Their findings also highlight that social factors, including job stability and access to welfare benefits, play a significant role in shaping satisfaction levels.

Statement Of The Problem

The construction industry in India is a major source of employment, largely within the informal sector where workers face job insecurity, unsafe conditions, and limited social protection. In Kerala, institutional mechanisms like the Kerala Building and Other Construction Workers Welfare Board provide welfare schemes to over 20 lakh registered workers. However, significant gaps exist in implementation and accessibility. Reports indicate over ₹2,000 crore in pending welfare dues, reflecting inefficiencies in benefit distribution and contributing to worker dissatisfaction. Studies also highlight wage inequality, disparities between migrant and local workers, and inconsistent work standards affecting quality of life. Additionally, worker enrolment has sharply declined from 32,313 in 2022 to 3,445 in 2024, indicating rising job instability. Despite a relatively strong welfare framework, issues such as delayed benefits, declining participation, and income disparities persist, creating a gap between policy and practice. This necessitates a focused study on job satisfaction among construction workers in Kerala, particularly in Palakkad district.

Objectives

1. To understand the demographic profile of the construction workers in Palakkad district.
2. To assess the satisfaction levels of construction workers in Palakkad district.

Resaerch Methodology

The present study adopts a descriptive and analytical research design to examine the problems faced by building construction workers. The study is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected from 200 building construction workers in Palakkad district using a convenience sampling method, while secondary data were gathered from journals, reports, and other relevant sources. For the purpose of data analysis, various statistical tools were employed, including descriptive analysis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov test to assess normality, and non-

parametric tests such as the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test to identify significant differences among variables.

Data Analysis

The demographic characteristics of construction workers play a crucial role in influencing their level of job satisfaction. Variations in satisfaction can be better understood by analyzing factors such as gender, age, educational qualification, marital status, and income. These demographic variables shape workers' perceptions, expectations, and experiences at the workplace.

Objective 1: To understand the demographic profile of the construction workers in Palakkad district.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Construction Workers

		No. of Construction Workers	Percent
Gender	Male	154	77.0
	Female	46	23.0
	Total	200	100.0
		No. of Construction Workers	Percent
Age	20-30	34	17.0
	30-40	44	22.0
	40-50	80	40.0
	Above 50	42	21.0
	Total	200	100.0
		No. of Construction Workers	Percent
Marital Status	Single	44	22.0
	Married	156	78.0
	Total	200	100.0
		No. of Construction Workers	Percent
Educational Qualification	Illiterate	58	29.0
	Primary	106	53.0
	Secondary	28	14.0
	Graduate	8	4.0
	Total	200	100.0
		No. of Construction Workers	Percent
Monthly Family Income	Below 5000	22	11.0
	5000-10000	52	26.0
	10000-15000	58	29.0
	Above 15000	68	34.0
	Total	200	100.0

Table 1 outlines the demographic profile of construction workers across various categories, shedding light on key aspects such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and monthly family income. The construction industry is predominantly male-dominated, with 77% of workers being male and 23% female. This highlights a gender imbalance, a common characteristic in the construction sector. The workforce is distributed across different age groups, with a significant percentage falling in the 40-50 age range (40%). This suggests a mature workforce with considerable experience. However, a balanced age distribution is essential for a sustainable and dynamic industry. The majority of construction workers are married (78%). This may have implications for the provision of benefits and social support systems, as married workers may have different needs and responsibilities compared to their single counterparts. A significant portion of the workforce has basic educational qualifications, with 29% being illiterate and 53% having completed primary education. This emphasizes the need for targeted training and educational programs within the industry to enhance skills and promote upward mobility. The distribution of monthly family income indicates a diverse economic background among construction workers. While 34% earn above 15000, 11% earn below 5000, reflecting a wide income gap.

Objective 2: To assess the satisfaction levels of construction workers in Kerala.

The satisfaction levels of construction workers play a pivotal role in determining their overall well-being and job-related contentment. This study focuses on the analysis of satisfaction among construction workers in the state of Kerala, aiming to gain insights into the factors influencing their contentment within the workplace. Understanding the dynamics of satisfaction is crucial for improving working conditions, fostering a positive work environment, and enhancing the overall quality of life for construction workers in Kerala. Through a comprehensive examination, this research seeks to contribute valuable perspectives to inform policies and interventions that can positively impact the satisfaction levels of construction workers in the region.

Table 2: Descriptive Statistics on Satisfaction of Construction Workers

Variables of Satisfaction	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work under safe and hygienic environment	3.410	1.300
Payment of wage when overtime work	4.360	1.008
There is healthy and comfortable environment	3.710	0.842
There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers	4.020	0.839

Table 2 presents descriptive statistics regarding the satisfaction of construction workers across various variables. The average satisfaction level with working under safe and hygienic conditions is moderate, indicated by the mean score of 3.410. However, the relatively high standard deviation of 1.300 suggests a considerable degree of variability in responses. Some workers may be highly satisfied, while others may express lower satisfaction levels regarding safety and hygiene at the workplace. Workers, on average, express a relatively high level of satisfaction (mean of 4.360) with the payment of wages for overtime work. The low standard deviation (1.008) indicates that there is a relatively narrow range of responses, suggesting a more consistent satisfaction level among workers regarding overtime pay. The mean score of 3.710 suggests a moderately positive satisfaction level with the availability of a healthy and comfortable working environment. The standard deviation of 0.842 indicates a moderate level of variability, with some workers expressing higher satisfaction than others. Workers, on average, report a positive satisfaction level (mean of 4.020) regarding their personal relationships with

both employers and co-workers. The standard deviation of 0.839 indicates moderate variability, with some workers having stronger positive relationships than others. While workers generally express satisfaction with overtime pay and interpersonal relationships, there are areas such as safety, hygiene, and the overall comfort of the work environment where satisfaction is more moderate.

Hypothesis

Hypothesis (H0): There is no significant difference in job satisfaction levels among construction workers in Kerala based on gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and monthly family income.

Hypothesis (H1): There is a significant difference in job satisfaction levels among construction workers in Kerala based on gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and monthly family income.

Table 3 presents the results of the One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test, specifically the Lilliefors Corrected version, conducted to assess the normality of variables related to the satisfaction of construction workers. The test examines whether the distributions of various satisfaction-related variables follow a normal distribution, based on given mean and standard deviation values. The significance level set for these tests is 0.050. The null hypothesis for each test posits that the distribution of the respective variable is normal. Conversely, the alternative hypothesis suggests that the distribution deviates significantly from normality.

Table 3: Normality of variables related to Satisfaction of Construction Workers

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is normal with mean 3.41 and standard deviation 1.30014.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ^a	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work is normal with mean 4.36 and standard deviation 1.00771.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ^a	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is normal with mean 3.71 and standard deviation .84229.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ^a	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is normal with mean 4.02 and standard deviation .83852.	One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test	.000 ^a	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

a. Lilliefors Corrected

The decision in each case is to reject the null hypothesis (Decision: Reject) as indicated by the extremely low p-values ($p = .000$), falling below the 0.050 significance level. This implies that the distribution of each satisfaction-related variable under consideration does not conform to a normal distribution. Table 3 presents the results of normality tests for variables related to the satisfaction of construction workers. The rejection of the null hypothesis for all variables

indicates that the satisfaction data for construction workers does not follow a normal distribution. Therefore, the researcher used non-parametric methods to prove the significant difference in job satisfaction levels among construction workers in Kerala.

Table 4: Mann-Whitney U Test on Satisfaction of Construction Workers with respect to gender

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.009	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.006	Reject the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.238	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is the same across categories of Gender.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.002	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

The provided table 4 summarizes the results of Mann-Whitney U Tests conducted on the satisfaction of construction workers with respect to gender. The p-value of 0.009 for satisfaction related to working under safe and hygienic conditions is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates a substantial difference in satisfaction levels between male and female construction workers in terms of safety and hygiene. The p-value of 0.006 for satisfaction with payment for overtime work is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Rejecting the null hypothesis suggests a notable gender-related difference in satisfaction levels. Re-evaluating and potentially revising overtime wage policies to ensure fairness and equity could contribute to a more satisfactory work environment. The p-value of 0.238 for satisfaction regarding a healthy and comfortable environment is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). Retaining the null hypothesis indicates no significant gender-related difference in satisfaction levels in this context. The work environment's perceived health and comfort appear to be consistent across genders. The p-value of 0.002 for satisfaction with personal relationships with employers and co-workers is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Rejecting the null hypothesis underscores a substantial gender-related difference. Implementing strategies to enhance interpersonal dynamics, especially for female workers, may positively impact overall job satisfaction.

Table 5: Kruskal-Wallis Test on Satisfaction of Construction Workers with respect to Age

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.001	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.009	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is the same across categories of Age.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.448	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

The provided table 5 summarizes the results of Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted on the satisfaction of construction workers with respect to age. The p-value of 0.000 for satisfaction regarding working under safe and hygienic conditions is highly significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This robust statistical evidence indicates a substantial difference in satisfaction levels across various age groups. It implies that tailored measures for safety and hygiene need to consider the diverse needs and preferences of workers across different age categories. The p-value of 0.001 for satisfaction with payment for overtime work is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). However, the null hypothesis is retained. This suggests that while there is a significant difference in satisfaction levels, it is not attributable to age. Other factors may be influencing disparities in satisfaction with overtime pay. The p-value of 0.009 for satisfaction regarding a healthy and comfortable environment is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This signifies a notable variation in satisfaction levels across different age categories in terms of the overall comfort of the work environment. The p-value of 0.448 for satisfaction with personal relationships with employers and co-workers is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is retained, indicating no significant age-related differences in satisfaction levels with personal relationships at the workplace.

Table 6: Mann-Whitney U Test on Satisfaction of Construction Workers with respect to Marital Status

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is the same across categories of Marital Status.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work is the same across categories of Marital Status.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.549	Retain the null hypothesis.
3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is the same across categories of Marital Status.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is the same across categories of Marital Status.	Independent-Samples Mann-Whitney U Test	0.154	Retain the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

The provided table 6 summarizes the results of Mann-Whitney U Test conducted on the satisfaction of construction workers with respect to marital status. The p-value of 0.000 for satisfaction regarding working under safe and hygienic conditions is highly significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies a substantial difference in satisfaction levels across marital status categories. It suggests that the perception of safety and hygiene varies significantly based on marital status, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to address these differences. The p-value of 0.549 for satisfaction with payment for overtime work is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is retained, suggesting that marital status does not significantly influence satisfaction levels with payment for overtime work. Other factors may play a more dominant role in shaping perceptions of compensation for additional hours worked. The p-value of 0.000 for satisfaction regarding a healthy and comfortable environment is highly significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a notable variation in satisfaction levels based on marital status concerning the overall comfort of the work environment. Implementing measures to enhance comfort may need to consider the unique needs of individuals based on their marital status. The p-value of 0.154 for satisfaction with personal relationships with employers and co-workers is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is retained, suggesting that marital status does not significantly impact satisfaction levels in interpersonal relationships at the workplace. Other factors may contribute more substantially to variations in this aspect of job satisfaction.

Table 7: Kruskal-Wallis Test on Satisfaction of Construction Workers with respect to Educational Qualification

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is the same across categories of Educational Qualification.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.014	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.006	Reject the null hypothesis.

	is the same across categories of Educational Qualification.			
3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is the same across categories of Educational Qualification.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.318	Retain the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is the same across categories of Educational Qualification.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.005	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

The provided table 7 summarizes the results of Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted on the satisfaction of construction workers with respect to education. The p-value of 0.014 for satisfaction regarding working under safe and hygienic conditions is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This implies a significant difference in satisfaction levels across educational qualification categories. Addressing safety and hygiene concerns may require tailored interventions that consider the diverse educational backgrounds of construction workers. The p-value of 0.006 for satisfaction with payment for overtime work is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests a notable variation in satisfaction levels based on educational qualification concerning payment for additional work. Strategies to address these differences may be crucial for ensuring equitable compensation practices. The p-value of 0.318 for satisfaction regarding a healthy and comfortable environment is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is retained, suggesting that educational qualification does not significantly impact satisfaction levels with the overall comfort of the work environment. Other factors may contribute more substantially to variations in this aspect of job satisfaction. The p-value of 0.005 for satisfaction with personal relationships with employers and co-workers is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a significant difference in satisfaction levels based on educational qualification concerning interpersonal relationships at the workplace.

Table 8: Kruskal-Wallis Test on Satisfaction of Construction Workers with respect to Monthly Family Income

	Null Hypothesis	Test	Sig.	Decision
1	The distribution of Work under safe and hygienic environment is the same across categories of Monthly Family Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.014	Reject the null hypothesis.
2	The distribution of Payment of wage when overtime work is the same across categories of Monthly Family Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.754	Retain the null hypothesis.

3	The distribution of There is healthy and comfortable environment is the same across categories of Monthly Family Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.005	Reject the null hypothesis.
4	The distribution of There is good personal relationship with both employer and co-workers is the same across categories of Monthly Family Income.	Independent-Samples Kruskal-Wallis Test	0.000	Reject the null hypothesis.

Asymptotic significances are displayed. The significance level is .050.

The provided table 8 summarizes the results of Kruskal-Wallis Test conducted on the satisfaction of construction workers with respect to income. The p-value of 0.014 for satisfaction regarding working under safe and hygienic conditions is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests a significant difference in satisfaction levels across monthly family income categories. It implies that strategies to enhance safety and hygiene perceptions may need to be tailored based on the income levels of construction workers. The p-value of 0.754 for satisfaction with payment for overtime work is not statistically significant ($p > 0.05$). The null hypothesis is retained, indicating that monthly family income does not significantly impact satisfaction levels with payment for additional work. Other factors may play a more dominant role in shaping perceptions of compensation for overtime. The p-value of 0.005 for satisfaction regarding a healthy and comfortable environment is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This indicates a notable variation in satisfaction levels based on monthly family income concerning the overall comfort of the work environment. Tailored interventions may be necessary to address the diverse needs of workers across income categories. The p-value of 0.000 for satisfaction with personal relationships with employers and co-workers is highly significant ($p < 0.05$), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis. This suggests a significant difference in satisfaction levels based on monthly family income concerning interpersonal relationships at the workplace. Initiatives to foster positive relationships may need to consider income-specific dynamics.

Findings

The study reveals that the construction workforce in Palakkad district is predominantly male and consists mainly of middle-aged, married workers with low educational qualifications, indicating limited access to skill development opportunities. Although a considerable proportion of workers fall within the middle-income group, income disparities are evident. In terms of job satisfaction, workers express high satisfaction with overtime wage payments and interpersonal relationships, while satisfaction with safety, hygiene, and overall working conditions remains moderate. The normality test indicates that the data do not follow a normal distribution, leading to the use of non-parametric tests for analysis. The results show that job satisfaction significantly varies across demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and monthly family income, particularly in areas related to safety, work environment, and interpersonal relationships, whereas satisfaction with overtime payment remains relatively consistent across groups.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, several measures can be suggested to improve the job satisfaction of construction workers in Kerala, particularly in Palakkad district. There is a need to enhance safety and hygiene standards at construction sites by providing proper protective equipment and regular safety training. Improving the overall working environment through basic facilities such as clean drinking water, sanitation, and rest areas is also essential. Although workers are relatively satisfied with overtime wages, ensuring timely and fair payment for all work is important. Special attention should be given to promoting gender equality and addressing differences in satisfaction across demographic groups. Skill development and educational programs can help workers improve their capabilities and career prospects. Additionally, strengthening the implementation of labour welfare schemes and increasing awareness among workers can ensure better access to benefits. Encouraging positive employer–worker relationships and ensuring income stability will further contribute to higher job satisfaction and overall well-being.

Conclusion

The present study on job satisfaction of construction workers in Kerala, with special reference to Palakkad district, reveals that while workers exhibit a reasonable level of satisfaction in certain aspects, significant gaps still exist in others. The findings indicate that workers are generally satisfied with overtime wage payments and interpersonal relationships with employers and co-workers. However, only moderate satisfaction is observed in areas such as safety, hygiene, and the overall working environment, which are critical to their well-being and productivity. The study also highlights that job satisfaction is not uniform across all workers and varies significantly based on demographic factors such as gender, age, marital status, educational qualification, and monthly family income. These variations suggest that different groups of workers experience workplace conditions differently, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions. The presence of a largely less-educated workforce and income disparities further underline the socio-economic challenges faced by construction workers. Overall, the study concludes that although some positive aspects exist within the construction sector, there is a pressing need to improve working conditions, strengthen welfare measures, and ensure equitable treatment of workers. Addressing these issues will not only enhance job satisfaction but also contribute to improved productivity, worker retention, and sustainable development of the construction industry in Kerala.

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