### Supply Chain Management in Construction Projects: A Comprehensive Analysis of the Indian Context - Review

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DOI: https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240132

#### **ABSTRACT**

Supply chain management (SCM) plays a crucial role in the success of construction projects, Influencing factors such as project timelines, costs, and overall efficiency. This literature review paper provides an in-depth analysis of SCM in construction, with a primary focus on the unique dynamics of the Indian construction industry. Drawing from a wide array of scholarly articles, research papers, and industry reports, this comprehensive review synthesizes existing knowledge in the field. It examines the evolution of SCM practices in the construction sector, emphasizing the shift from traditional methods contemporary, to technology-driven solutions. Furthermore, this literature review explores key SCM elements procurement, logistics, management, sustainability, and the integration ofadvanced technologies within construction supply chain. Sustainability emerges as a significant theme in this review, as discusses the growing emphasis environmentally responsible SCM practices in construction projects. In conclusion, this literature review offers a comprehensive overview of supply chain management in construction projects, with a specific focus on India. It serves as a valuable resource for researchers, industry professionals, policymakers seeking to understand intricacies of SCM in the Indian construction sector. Additionally, the review highlights areas for further research and development, paving the way for continued advancements in construction SCM practices.

*Keywords:* Supply Chain Management; Construction Projects; Sustainability; Technology Integration; Logistics;

#### INTRODUCTION

# A. Background and significance of the study

In the ever-evolving landscape of India's industry, the construction relentless symphony of hammers and cranes resonates with the nation's aspirations for growth and development [1-2]. With each towering skyscraper and intricate infrastructure project, India marches forward, fuelled by construction sector's undeniable contribution to its economic vitality [3]. However. behind this awe-inspiring spectacle lies a complex web of challenges, intricacies, and stakeholders, where the key to success rests in the hands of a wellorchestrated Supply Chain Management (SCM) system [4].

Amidst this dynamic and multifaceted environment, the realm of Supply Chain Management in the context of Indian construction projects emerges as a critical, yet uncharted, territory. This literature review embarks on a comprehensive journey, illuminating the nuances, challenges, and best practices within this

crucial field. In addition, unravel the intricacies of SCM, and its pivotal role in ensuring cost-effective, timely. harmonious project deliveries in the heart of Indian construction industry Furthermore, it is need to explore the complex and dynamic orchestra of supply chain management, striving to create a harmonious symphony amidst the bustling backdrop of India's construction projects [6]. The purpose of this study is to delve into the realm of Supply Chain Management in the context of construction projects in India. Through an extensive examination of existing literature, this review aims to achieve the following objectives:

- To Synthesize and analyze the existing literature on Supply Chain Management in Construction
- To identify key themes, trends, and patterns in the research.
- To assess the evolution of supply chain management practices in the construction industry.
- To highlight the unique challenges and opportunities in the Indian Construction Content.
- To explore the role of technology and sustainability. Construction Supply Chain Management.
- To provide insights and recommendations for practitioners, researchers, and policymakers in the field.

### **MATERIALS & METHODS**

This paper is designed to offer a comprehensive examination of Supply Chain Management (SCM) in construction projects, with a specific focus on the Indian context. The paper aims to provide readers with a holistic understanding of SCM practices, challenges, opportunities, and sustainability considerations within the Indian construction industry. The following is an overview of the scope and organization of the paper:

# • Supply Chain Management in Construction:

- i. This section will establish a solid foundation by defining SCM in the context of construction.
- ii. It will explore SCM's fundamental principles and concepts, emphasizing its critical role in construction projects.
- iii. Key components of SCM in construction will be discussed, setting the stage for a deeper exploration in later sections.

### • Evolution of SCM in Construction:

- This section will delve into the historical evolution of SCM practices within the Indian construction industry.
- ii. It will examine the transition from traditional SCM methods to more modern and efficient strategies.
- iii. The impact of technology on SCM in construction projects, including the adoption of digital tools and processes, will be a focal point.

# • Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Construction:

- i. This section will explore the unique challenges faced by construction projects in India, rooted in cultural influences, regulatory frameworks, and infrastructural limitations.
- ii. Regulatory considerations and policy implications will be analyzed, with a focus on how they affect SCM practices.
- iii. Real-world case studies will be presented to highlight specific challenges and innovative solutions adopted in the Indian context.

# • SCM Elements in Construction Projects:

- i. This section will break down the various elements that constitute SCM in construction projects.
- ii. It will cover topics such as procurement and vendor management, logistics and transportation, risk management, sustainability practices, and the integration of technology.
- iii. Each element will be examined in detail, providing insights into best practices and strategies for optimization.

# • Sustainability in Construction SCM:

- i. This section will emphasize the growing importance of sustainability in construction SCM.
- ii. It will explore the adoption of sustainable materials and practices, as well as efforts to reduce the environmental footprint of construction projects.
- iii. Compliance with green building standards and certifications will be discussed.

#### • Summary:

- i. This section will summarize the key findings and insights derived from the literature review.
- ii. It will discuss the implications of these findings for the Indian construction industry, offering practical takeaways for industry practitioners and policymakers.
- iii. Additionally, the section will highlight areas for potential future research and development in the field of construction SCM in India.

Through this structured exploration, we aim to shed light on the intricate and dynamic world of Supply Chain Management in construction projects, particularly within the unique context of India, providing valuable insights for industry stakeholders, researchers, and policymakers.

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#### **RESULT & DISCUSSION**

### II. Supply Chain Management in Construction

# A. Conceptual framework of supply chain management

Supply Chain Management (SCM) is a multifaceted discipline that encompasses the end-to-end management of processes and resources involved in the flow of materials and information from the initial supplier to the final customer [7]. In construction, SCM extends to the planning, procurement, transportation, storage, and coordination of materials, equipment, and labor throughout the project lifecycle. The construction SCM framework comprises a series interconnected stages, each playing a vital role in ensuring the efficiency and success of construction projects:

- **1. Planning**: The initial phase involves project planning and design, where key decisions are made regarding project scope, materials, and timelines. Effective SCM in this stage involves forecasting material requirements, selecting suppliers, and establishing clear communication channels.
- **2. Procurement**: Procurement is the process of sourcing and acquiring materials, equipment, and services necessary for construction. SCM in procurement includes supplier selection, negotiation of contracts, and the establishment of reliable procurement processes.
- **3. Production:** This stage involves the actual construction work, where materials are transformed into structures. SCM here focuses on inventory management, ensuring materials are readily available when needed to prevent delays and cost overruns.

- **4. Distribution** encompasses the transportation of materials and equipment to the Construction site. Efficient logistics and transportation management are essential to minimize transportation costs, reduce lead times, and maintain project schedules.
- **5. Information Flow:** Throughout the construction project, effective communication and information flow are critical. SCM integrates information systems to facilitate real-time data sharing among stakeholders, enabling proactive decision-making and issue resolution.

# **B.** Importance of SCM in Construction Projects

The importance of SCM in construction cannot be overstated. It serves as the backbone of project success, impacting factors like cost control, project timelines, and quality management [3]. SCM ensures that materials are available when needed, reducing delays and cost overruns. Effective SCM is of paramount importance in construction projects for several compelling reasons:

- **1. Cost Control:** Construction projects often operate on tight budgets, and effective SCM can help control costs by minimizing waste, optimizing inventory, and negotiating favorable terms with suppliers.
- **2. Project Efficiency:** SCM streamlines project processes, reducing delays and bottlenecks. This leads to shorter project durations and improved efficiency.
- **3. Quality Assurance:** Proper SCM ensures that the right materials of the required quality are available at the right time. This helps maintain construction quality standards.
- **4. Risk Mitigation:** SCM strategies include risk assessment and management, allowing construction teams to anticipate and mitigate potential disruptions in the supply chain.
- **5. Stakeholder Collaboration:** SCM fosters collaboration among various project stakeholders, including owners, contractors,

- subcontractors, and suppliers, creating a cohesive project team.
- **6. Sustainability:** SCM in construction is increasingly focused on sustainability, promoting the use of eco-friendly materials and practices to reduce the environmental impact of projects.

### C. Key Components of SCM in Construction

SCM in construction encompasses several key components that collectively contribute to its effectiveness. These include procurement, logistics, risk management, sustainability considerations, and technology integration [4].

- **1. Supplier Relationship Management** (**SRM**): Developing strong relationships with suppliers is crucial for reliable material deliveries and cost negotiations
- **2. Inventory Management**: Maintaining optimal inventory levels to prevent material shortages or excess inventory is essential for cost control and project efficiency.
- **3. Logistics and Transportation:** Efficient logistics planning and transportation management ensure that materials are delivered to the construction site on time, reducing project delays.
- **4. Risk Management**: Identifying and mitigating risks related to supply chain disruptions, such as weather, geopolitical factors, or supplier issues, is essential to ensure project continuity.
- **5. Technology Integration:** Utilizing technology solutions such as construction management software, lot sensors, and data analytics helps automate and optimize SCM processes.
- **6. Sustainability Practices:** Integrating sustainable materials and practices into SCM aligns with environmental and regulatory requirements while fostering a positive corporate image.

Understanding these components and their interplay within the construction SCM framework is essential for effective project management and successful project outcomes. In the context of India, where

construction projects span diverse regions and face unique challenges, a well-structured SCM approach becomes even more critical for achieving project goals and delivering value to stakeholders.

# III. Evolution of SCM in ConstructionA. Traditional SCM Practices in Construction

Historically, SCM practices in construction were marked by a lack of integration, with materials often being sourced locally and procurement processes remaining decentralized [7]. Traditional SCM practices in India faced challenges related to fragmentation and inefficiency.

- 1. Fragmented Procurement: Traditionally, procurement in construction projects involved individual sourcing of materials, often with limited coordination. Multiple suppliers were engaged for different materials and components, leading to inefficiencies in terms of pricing and delivery.
- 2. Reliance on Local Suppliers: Construction projects primarily relied on local suppliers and manufacturers due to limitations in transportation and infrastructure. This geographical confinement sometimes resulted in limited access to diverse materials and technologies.
- 3. Manual Documentation: Documentation and record-keeping were largely manual processes, leading to delays and errors in tracking materials, payments, and orders.
- 4. Limited Technology Integration: The integration of technology, such as construction management software and real-time tracking systems, was minimal. This lack of automation hindered transparency and data-driven decision-making.
- 5. Minimal Risk Management: Risk management practices were often reactive rather than proactive, with minimal consideration given to supply chain disruptions caused by factors like weather, regulatory changes, or supplier issues.

### B. Transition to modern SCM strategies

The construction industry in India has undergone a significant shift towards modern SCM strategies. This transition is characterized by centralized procurement, digital transformation, and a proactive approach to risk management [9].

- 1. Centralized Procurement: Modern SCM emphasizes centralized procurement, where project managers and procurement teams collaborate to consolidate material requirements and negotiate contracts with selected suppliers. This approach allows for bulk purchasing, better pricing, and improved delivery schedules.
- 2. Global Supplier Networks: Advances in transportation and communication have facilitated the inclusion of global suppliers and manufacturers in the construction supply chain. This broader network offers access to a wider range of materials and technologies.
- 3. Digital Documentation and Communication: The construction industry has embraced digital documentation and communication systems. Electronic record-keeping, project management software, and collaborative platforms have streamlined information flow and reduced paperwork.
- 4. Technology Integration: The integration of technology solutions, including Building Information Modeling (BIM), Internet of Things (IoT) sensors, and supply chain management software, has enhanced visibility and control over the construction supply chain. Real-time tracking and data analytics enable better decision-making.
- 5. Proactive Risk Management: Modern SCM practices prioritize proactive risk management. Construction teams conduct risk assessments and develop contingency plans to address potential disruptions, ensuring project continuity.

### C. Impact of technology on SCM in construction

Technology has played a transformative role in SCM for construction. The integration of digital tools, data analytics, and real-time tracking systems has enhanced transparency and decision-making within the supply chain [8].

- 1. BIM and Digital Twins: Building Information Modeling (BIM) and digital twin technologies enable comprehensive project planning and simulation, optimizing material use and construction sequencing.
- 2. IoT Sensors: IoT sensors provide realtime monitoring of material conditions, enabling predictive maintenance and reducing material wastage.
- 3. Supply Chain Management Software: Specialized SCM software solutions have emerged, offering end-to-end visibility and control over the construction supply chain. These platforms facilitate collaboration, streamline procurement, and enhance logistics management.
- 4. Data Analytics: Data analytics tools help construction professionals make data-driven decisions, identify trends, and optimize SCM processes for cost savings and efficiency improvements.

In the Indian construction context, the transition to modern SCM practices, driven by technology integration and global best practices, represents a significant step forward in enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of construction projects. However, the industry continues to evolve, and staying at the forefront of SCM innovation remains a priority for stakeholders seeking to deliver successful projects in this dynamic environment.

# IV. Challenges and Opportunities in Indian Construction

### A. Cultural influences on SCM practices

Cultural diversity in India influences SCM practices in construction. Language barriers, hierarchical structures, and local norms can pose challenges, but they also offer opportunities for local expertise and innovation [11].

#### **Challenges:**

1. Language and Communication: India's linguistic diversity can pose challenges in communication between stakeholders

- involved in construction projects. Language barriers may lead to misunderstandings, delays, and misinterpretations.
- 2. Hierarchical Structures: Traditional hierarchical organizational structures may hinder effective collaboration and decision-making, affecting SCM coordination.
- 3. Local Norms and Practices: Cultural norms and practices in different regions of India can impact SCM strategies. For example, variations in construction practices and preferences for certain materials may require adaptation.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Local Expertise: India's diversity also provides access to a wealth of local expertise. Collaboration with local suppliers and partners who understand regional nuances can be advantageous in SCM.
- 2. Cultural Sensitivity: A culturally sensitive approach to SCM can build trust and stronger relationships with stakeholders, enhancing project cooperation.
- 3. Innovation and Adaptation: SCM practices that are adaptable to local customs and preferences can drive innovation. Leveraging traditional construction methods and materials alongside modern approaches can lead to cost-effective and sustainable solutions.

# **B.** Regulatory Framework and Policy Considerations

India's complex regulatory framework presents challenges related to bureaucracy, taxation, and compliance. However, government initiatives and policy reforms provide opportunities for streamlining SCM processes [12].

#### **Challenges:**

- 1. Bureaucracy and Red Tape: Cumbersome bureaucratic processes and regulatory red tape can lead to delays in procurement, permitting, and project approvals, impacting SCM timelines.
- 2. Taxation and Tariffs: Varied state-level taxation and import/export tariffs can add

complexity to SCM cost calculations and require careful planning.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Government Initiatives: Government initiatives like "Make in India" and "Smart Cities" create opportunities for construction projects, encouraging innovation and investment in infrastructure.
- 2. Policy Reforms: Ongoing policy reforms aimed at simplifying regulations and improving the ease of doing business in India can lead to smoother SCM processes.

### C. Infrastructural Limitations and Their Effects on SCM

Challenges related to transportation, energy supply, and infrastructural limitations are prevalent in India. However, these challenges drive opportunities for infrastructure development and technology adoption to improve SCM efficiency [13].

### **Challenges:**

- 1. Transportation and Logistics: Inadequate transportation infrastructure, congested road networks, and limited rail connectivity can lead to delays and increased transportation costs.
- 2. Energy and Utilities: Inconsistent power supply and limited access to reliable utilities can disrupt construction schedules and operations.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Infrastructure Development: The need for infrastructure development in India creates opportunities for construction projects. Improved infrastructure can enhance SCM efficiency.
- 2. Technology Adoption: The adoption of technology, such as digital tracking and automation in logistics and material handling, can mitigate some infrastructural challenges.

# D. Case studies highlighting specific Indian challenges and solutions

Case studies illustrate the practical challenges and solutions within Indian construction SCM. They provide insights into how cultural, regulatory, and

infrastructural challenges can be addressed to achieve successful outcomes [13].

# V. SCM Elements in Construction Projects

Effective Supply Chain Management (SCM) construction projects involves the orchestration of several key elements, each contributing to the overall success of the project. In the Indian context, these elements take on unique characteristics influenced by the country's diverse construction landscape and specific challenges. This section delves into the essential elements of SCM in construction projects, highlighting their significance and contextual considerations:

# A. Procurement and Vendor Management

Procurement: Procurement involves the strategic acquisition of materials and services in construction projects. Effective procurement strategies reduce costs and ensure timely material delivery [14].

#### **Challenges:**

- 1. Supplier Diversity: India's vast geography and varied regional preferences necessitate an extensive supplier network, which can be challenging to manage efficiently.
- 2. Regulatory Compliance: Compliance with complex procurement regulations and government policies is essential but can be time-consuming and requires specialized knowledge.
- 3. Price Fluctuations: Price fluctuations for construction materials can impact project budgets, requiring vigilant cost monitoring.

#### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Local Sourcing: Leveraging local suppliers can reduce transportation costs and promote community engagement.
- 2. Strategic Partnerships: Building long-term relationships with reliable suppliers can ensure a stable supply chain.
- 3. Technology Integration: Procurement technologies, such as e-procurement platforms, can streamline the procurement

process and enhance transparency.

### **B.** Logistics and Transportation

Logistics and Transportation: Logistics and transportation play a crucial role in SCM by ensuring the efficient movement of materials and equipment. Innovations in logistics can mitigate challenges related to transportation infrastructure [15].

### **Challenges:**

- 1. Infrastructure Limitations: India's road and rail infrastructure may not meet the demands of efficient logistics, leading to delays and increased costs.
- 2. Traffic Congestion: Urban areas often face severe traffic congestion, affecting the timely delivery of materials.
- 3. Last-Mile Challenges: The challenge of delivering materials to remote or congested construction sites can disrupt project schedules.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Technology Adoption: GPS tracking, real-time monitoring, and route optimization technologies can mitigate transportation challenges.
- 2. Alternative Transportation: Exploring alternative transportation modes like waterways and air freight can offer solutions in specific contexts.
- 3. Warehouse Optimization: Efficient storage and inventory management in construction yards can reduce last-mile challenges.

### C. Risk Management in Construction SCM

Risk Management: Proactive risk management is vital to address unforeseen disruptions in the supply chain. Contingency planning and data-driven decision-making can mitigate risks [15].

#### Challenges:

1. Environmental Risks: India is prone to natural disasters like floods and cyclones,

- which can impact construction sites and supply chain routes.
- 2. Geopolitical Risks: Changes in government policies, trade disputes, and regulatory uncertainties can pose risks to SCM in construction.
- 3. Supplier Reliability: Ensuring the reliability of suppliers, especially in times of economic uncertainty, can be challenging.

### Opportunities:

- 1. Predictive Analytics: Utilizing data analytics and risk modeling can provide insights into potential disruptions and inform proactive risk mitigation strategies.
- 2. Contingency Planning: Developing contingency plans for various risk scenarios ensures that construction projects can adapt to unforeseen challenges.
- 3. Sustainability as Risk Mitigation: Sustainable practices can reduce environmental risks and contribute to risk mitigation by minimizing ecological impact.

# D. Sustainability Considerations and Green Supply Chain Principles

Sustainability: Sustainability is increasingly vital in construction SCM. This includes using eco-friendly materials, reducing the environmental footprint of construction projects, and complying with green building standards [7].

### **Challenges:**

- 1. Awareness and Compliance: Raising awareness of sustainability principles and ensuring compliance with green building standards can be challenging.
- 2. Cost Considerations: Sustainable materials and practices may initially appear more expensive, requiring a careful costbenefit analysis.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Government Incentives: Government incentives and regulations promoting sustainability can encourage its adoption in construction SCM.
- 2. Market Demand: Increasing awareness and demand for sustainable construction can

drive the adoption of green supply chain principles.

3. Long-term Savings: Sustainable practices often result in long-term cost savings through energy efficiency and reduced resource consumption.

# E. Technology Integration in the Construction Supply Chain

Technology Integration: The integration of technology solutions, such as digital tracking and data analytics, enhances transparency and efficiency within the construction supply chain [6].

### VI. Sustainability in Construction SCM

Sustainability is an increasingly critical consideration in the construction industry worldwide, and this holds in the context of Supply Management Chain (SCM). Sustainable SCM practices in construction involve the integration of environmentally friendly materials and practices throughout the supply chain to minimize the ecological footprint of construction projects. In India, where the construction industry is rapidly expanding, embracing sustainability in SCM is crucial to meet environmental goals and regulatory requirements.

# A. Sustainable Materials and Practices in Construction

Sustainable Materials: The adoption of sustainable materials and practices in construction contributes to reducing the ecological footprint of projects [8], such as lower carbon emissions, reduced energy consumption, and minimal waste generation.

#### **Challenges:**

- 1. Awareness and Education: Promoting awareness about sustainable materials and their benefits among stakeholders is essential but often requires education and training.
- 2. Material Availability: Some sustainable materials may have limited availability or higher costs, which can influence procurement decisions.

3. Performance Standards: Ensuring that sustainable materials meet the performance standards required for construction is essential.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Regulatory Support: Government incentives and regulations promoting sustainable materials can encourage their use in construction projects.
- 2. Lifecycle Assessment: Conducting a lifecycle assessment of materials can help identify the long-term environmental benefits and cost savings associated with sustainability.
- 3. Market Demand: Increasing awareness and demand for green construction can drive the availability and affordability of sustainable materials.

# **B.** Reducing the Environmental Footprint of Construction Projects

Environmental Impact Reduction: Efforts to reduce the environmental impact of construction projects involve practices such as minimizing waste, optimizing energy use, and using sustainable materials [10]. Challenges:

- 1. Project-Specific Challenges: Each construction project may have unique environmental challenges and requirements, necessitating tailored sustainability solutions.
- 2. Balancing Cost and Impact: Balancing sustainability goals with budget constraints can be challenging, as eco-friendly practices and materials may initially appear costlier.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Project-Level Sustainability Plans: Developing project-specific sustainability plans can help address unique environmental challenges and set clear goals.
- 2. Long-Term Cost Savings: Emphasizing the long-term cost savings associated with energy-efficient and sustainable practices can justify initial investments.
- 3. Collaboration and Certification: Collaboration with green building

certification bodies can help ensure compliance with sustainability standards and provide project recognition.

### C. Compliance with Green Building Standards

Green Building Standards: Compliance with green building standards is a crucial aspect of sustainability in construction SCM. It ensures that projects adhere to environmentally responsible practices [12].

### **Challenges:**

- 1. Compliance Costs: Achieving green building certification can involve additional costs for documentation, testing, and verification.
- 2. Complexity: Navigating the requirements of green building standards can be complex, requiring specialized knowledge and expertise.

### **Opportunities:**

- 1. Market Competitiveness: Green building certifications can enhance a project's market competitiveness by appealing to environmentally conscious clients and investors [13].
- 2. Sustainable Supply Chain: Integrating green building standards into SCM practices can drive the adoption of sustainable materials and practices throughout the supply chain [14].
- 3. Energy Efficiency: Many green building standards emphasize energy efficiency, which can lead to long-term cost savings and reduced environmental impact [15].

In India. where urbanization construction are on the rise, incorporating sustainability into SCM practices essential for mitigating the environmental impact of construction projects, complying with regulations, and meeting the demands of environmentally conscious clients. By embracing sustainable materials, reducing the environmental footprint, and adhering to green building standards, the Indian construction industry can contribute to a more sustainable and eco-friendly future while achieving project success.

#### **Summary**

### A. Recap of key findings and insights from the literature

The study has revealed significant insights into the evolution of SCM practices in the Indian construction industry. It emphasizes the shift from traditional practices to modern SCM strategies, driven by the integration of technology and a proactive risk management approach.

# **B.** Implications for the Indian construction industry

The insights gained from this work have important implications for the Indian construction industry, emphasizing the need for proactive adaptation to address cultural, regulatory, and infrastructural challenges. It also highlights the importance of technology adoption, sustainability, and risk mitigation.

# C. Areas for future research and development in construction SCM

The literature review has identified areas for future research and development, including further exploration of digital transformation, sustainable innovations, regulatory impacts, and best practices for specific construction sectors.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Supply Chain Management in the Indian construction industry is undergoing a transformative evolution marked by the adoption of modern practices technology integration. Challenges stemming from cultural diversity, regulatory complexities, and infrastructural limitations are balanced by opportunities innovation, sustainability, and efficiency. As the industry continues to evolve, embracing technology, sustainability, and proactive risk management will be key to achieving success in construction SCM. Future research should focus on digital transformation, sustainable innovation, regulatory impacts, and benchmarking best practices. By addressing these areas, the Indian construction industry can further enhance its SCM practices, fostering a more sustainable and efficient future.

**Declaration by Authors Acknowledgement:** None **Source of Funding:** None

**Conflict of Interest:** The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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How to cite this article: K.B. Jaisree, B. Palani. Supply chain management in construction projects: a comprehensive analysis of the Indian context - review. *International Journal of Research and Review*. 2024; 11(1): 298-308. DOI: https://doi.org/10.52403/ijrr.20240132

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