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CLOUD ACCOUNTING IN PRACTICE: A STUDY OF FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND ACCOUNTING OPERATIONS AT TALLY CLOUD 9 SOFT TECH

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ABSTRACT

The proliferation of cloud-based accounting platforms across India has fundamentally altered how small and medium enterprises record, process, and report financial information. This transformation has been further accelerated by the regulatory obligations introduced under the Goods and Services Tax framework, which requires businesses to maintain digital records and file periodic returns with precision and regularity. Within this landscape, firms that provide cloud accounting solutions occupy a distinctive position: they are simultaneously technology service providers to their clients and business entities that must govern their own finances with the same rigour they advocate to others. This study examines the financial management and accounting operations at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, a twenty-two employee authorised Tally solutions provider based in Gudiyatham, Tamil Nadu. The investigation covers accounts receivable and payable management, payroll processing, GST and TDS compliance, bank reconciliation, financial reporting, and budgeting practices. The research was conducted between January 2026 and March 2026 using a descriptive and analytical case study design, drawing on direct observation, structured interaction with the finance team, and review of internal financial records. The findings establish that the firm maintains a competent and reliable operational accounting framework anchored on TallyPrime, with particular strength in statutory compliance and payroll processing. Notwithstanding these strengths, the study identifies meaningful gaps in formal budgeting, cash flow forecasting, and balance sheet review frequency. These gaps limit the firm's capacity for proactive financial governance and strategic planning. The paper contextualises these findings within the existing literature on SME financial management and cloud accounting adoption, and offers practical recommendations to strengthen the firm's financial management maturity. The study contributes to an emerging body of research focused on technology service firms operating in India's tier-two town economies.

KEYWORDS: *Cloud Accounting, Tally ERP, Financial Management, SME Accounting, GST Compliance, Working Capital Management, Digital Transformation.*

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid diffusion of digital financial tools across India's small business sector represents one of the more consequential developments in the country's recent economic history. Cloud-based accounting platforms, once considered the preserve of larger enterprises with dedicated information technology departments, have become accessible to businesses employing fewer than twenty-five people, operating from towns with populations well below a metropolitan threshold, and generating revenues that would historically have been managed through paper ledgers and annual visits to a local chartered accountant.

This transformation has been driven by a combination of forces. On the regulatory side, the nationwide introduction of the Goods and Services Tax in July 2017 imposed a compliance architecture that made manual record-keeping impractical for any registered business. Firms were now required to file multiple returns each month, reconcile input tax credits against the purchase register, and maintain invoice-level records accessible for audit. On the technology side, broadband penetration into smaller towns, declining hardware costs, and the emergence of subscription-based software models made platforms such as TallyPrime financially accessible to firms that previously could not have justified the investment.

Within this context, authorised Tally solutions providers have emerged as a critical intermediary layer in India's accounting technology ecosystem. These firms sell software licences, set up cloud hosting environments, train client staff, and provide ongoing compliance support to small businesses that lack internal accounting expertise. Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, located in Gudiyatham in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu, is one such firm. With twenty-two employees and a client base spanning small traders, manufacturers, and service enterprises across the region, the company operates at the intersection of financial technology and business advisory services.

What makes Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech a particularly compelling subject for academic inquiry is the apparent paradox embedded in its position. A firm whose core commercial proposition is helping clients achieve financial management discipline through cloud accounting technology should, by reasonable expectation, demonstrate exemplary financial management practices within its own operations. Whether this expectation is borne out in practice, and where gaps exist if it is not, are the central questions this paper seeks to answer.

This study was conducted between January 2026 and March 2026 as part of the project period associated with the B.Com

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programme at Saveetha Engineering College, Chennai. The research draws on direct observation of day-to-day financial operations, structured interaction with the firm's finance team and management, and review of available internal records. It contributes to a limited but growing literature on financial management practices in technology service firms operating outside India's metropolitan centres.

1.1 Scope and Significance

The scope of this study is confined to the internal financial management operations of Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech. It does not extend to the firm's client-facing advisory work, the technology infrastructure underlying its cloud hosting services, or the financial management practices of its clients. The dimensions examined include accounts receivable and payable management, payroll processing, GST and TDS compliance, bank reconciliation, financial reporting, and budgeting. The study carries significance for practitioners seeking to understand the financial governance challenges of small technology service firms, for educators developing case material on cloud accounting in Indian business contexts, and for policymakers with an interest in the financial management capabilities of firms operating in India's tier-two and tier-three economies.

2. Problem Statement

A widely held assumption in discussions of cloud accounting technology is that firms which adopt these platforms, and particularly those whose business purpose is to sell and support them, necessarily exhibit mature and well-organised financial management practices. This assumption conflates technology adoption with financial governance capability. The two are related but not identical. A firm may operate a sophisticated accounting system while simultaneously lacking the planning disciplines, governance structures, and analytical habits that constitute genuine financial management maturity.

Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech presents a case through which this assumption can be examined with some precision. As an authorised Tally solutions provider, the firm has a strong operational incentive to implement TallyPrime comprehensively and to use it correctly. Staff familiarity with the platform is high, compliance functions are embedded into daily workflow, and the firm is aware of best practices from its work with clients. Yet familiarity with an accounting platform does not automatically generate formal budgets, rolling cash flow forecasts, or structured variance review processes. These planning-level disciplines require deliberate management attention that may not materialise in small firms regardless of the technology available to them.

This study seeks to critically examine the financial management practices at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech across both the operational and planning levels, to document where competence is evident and where gaps exist, and to offer practical recommendations grounded in the findings and in the existing literature.

3. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objectives of this study are as follows:

1. To examine and document the financial management and accounting workflow at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech in systematic detail.
2. To evaluate the firm's accounts receivable, accounts payable, payroll, GST compliance, and bank reconciliation practices against established financial management standards.
3. To assess the adequacy of the firm's financial reporting and budgeting practices.
4. To identify gaps in the firm's financial management framework and recommend practical improvements aligned with the firm's scale and operational context.
5. To contribute to the academic literature on financial management practices in small cloud accounting service firms operating in semi-urban India.

4. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Research Design

This study follows a descriptive and analytical research design. Since the objective was to examine and evaluate the financial management practices of a specific organisation rather than to test hypotheses across a sample population, a single-organisation case study approach was appropriate. Case study methodology is well established in accounting and financial management research where depth of understanding within a particular organisational context is prioritised over statistical generalisability. The design is consistent with the exploratory and evaluative purpose of the inquiry.

4.2 Sources of Data

Primary data was collected through two channels. First, direct observation of the firm's day-to-day financial operations during the project period allowed the researcher to witness accounting processes as they were executed rather than as they were described. Second, structured interactions with the firm's finance team members, the operations head, and management representatives provided process-level understanding of the policies, practices, and tools in use across each financial function. Secondary data was drawn from internal records made available with management permission, including sample invoices, payroll summaries, GST return summaries, bank reconciliation statements, and monthly financial reports.

4.3 Tools of Analysis

The analysis was conducted through systematic observation and thematic evaluation of practices against established financial management principles as documented in the academic literature and standard accounting frameworks. The tools employed in the study include the following:

- Descriptive process mapping to document each financial function in the order it is performed.
- Comparative evaluation of observed practices against best practices reported in the literature.
- Ratio and trend observation where financial data was accessible, including debtor ageing patterns and payroll cost proportions.
- Thematic assessment to identify recurring strengths and gaps across the firm's financial management framework.

No survey instrument or statistical testing was employed, as the study was not designed to generate generalisable quantitative

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findings. This methodology is consistent with case-based financial management research of this type.

4.4 Scope of the Study

The study is limited to the internal financial management operations of Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech as observed during the project period from January 2026 to March 2026. It does not extend to client-facing services, technology architecture, or comparative analysis with other firms. Financial data referenced in the study is illustrative and drawn from available internal records; specific revenue or profit figures have not been disclosed in accordance with the firm's confidentiality expectations.

5. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The financial management of small and medium enterprises has attracted considerable academic attention across a range of sectors and geographies. Several thematic clusters in this literature are directly relevant to the context of Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, including working capital management, cloud accounting adoption, statutory compliance, and the adequacy of reporting and planning practices in small firms.

Pandey (2015) underlined that accounts receivable management is particularly consequential for service firms that operate on billing cycles. Delayed collections, he observed, can generate liquidity pressure even in businesses that are fundamentally profitable, because the mismatch between revenue recognition and cash receipt creates intervals during which operating expenses must be met from reserves rather than from incoming cash. This observation is directly applicable to a firm such as Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, where software licence sales and service contracts are billed to clients on credit terms that vary by client type. Brealey, Myers and Allen (2011) extended this perspective by emphasising that sound working capital management is not merely reactive cash management but requires a disciplined approach to collections, payment scheduling, and short-term liquidity planning that anticipates rather than responds to cash flow pressures.

Mukherjee (2016) documented the transformation in compliance workload that the introduction of GST imposed on small service firms, creating substantial demand for accounting software capable of automating return preparation and tracking input tax credits systematically. His findings illuminate the commercial environment in which firms such as Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech operate and grew. Sharma and Gupta (2014) found that businesses with comprehensive Tally integration reported significantly fewer reconciliation errors and tax filing delays than those using partial or manual systems, providing empirical support for the operational approach observed at the subject firm.

Krishnaswamy, Mathirajan and Bhatt (2015), in their study of small enterprises in Tamil Nadu, identified cash flow management as the most persistently cited financial concern among small business owners and recommended cloud accounting tools as the most accessible means of improving financial visibility. Chandra (2017) identified a specific complexity affecting B2B service firms: because billing terms are frequently negotiated individually with each client rather than standardised, maintaining consistent collection workflows becomes structurally difficult. This challenge is directly observable at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, where institutional clients and individual clients operate under different credit arrangements that require differentiated management attention.

Rangarajan (2020) found that while most small firms in Tamil Nadu produced monthly profit and loss statements with reasonable regularity, balance sheet reviews were conducted infrequently, limiting management's awareness of long-term financial obligations, asset conditions, and liability positions. Joshi (2022) argued that weekly bank reconciliation serves as a foundational internal control practice, preventing accumulations of undetected errors and unauthorised entries that monthly reconciliation would allow to compound. Singh and Kaur (2021) demonstrated that firms generating regular management information system reports made better-informed decisions on credit extension, cost management, and pricing. Brigham and Houston (2019) cautioned that the absence of formal cash flow projection remains among the most persistent financial governance vulnerabilities in small technology service firms.

Taken together, the literature suggests a consistent pattern: while transactional accounting has improved substantially with the adoption of digital accounting platforms, planning-level disciplines, including formal budgeting, cash flow forecasting, and structured variance review, remain absent or weakly developed in many small firms. This study examines where Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech stands relative to these documented patterns.

6. COMPANY PROFILE

Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech is a technology service enterprise incorporated and operating in Gudiyatham, a town in the Vellore district of Tamil Nadu. The firm was established to address the growing demand for cloud-based accounting infrastructure and GST compliance support among small businesses in the region, a demand that expanded significantly following the nationwide implementation of the Goods and Services Tax in 2017.

The company holds authorised Tally solutions provider status, which enables it to sell TallyPrime software licences, set up cloud accounting environments, provide staff training, and deliver ongoing support services to client businesses. Its client base spans a diverse range of enterprise types, including small manufacturing units, retail traders, construction contractors, and service establishments, all of whom require GST-compliant accounting systems and periodic assistance with return filing and reconciliation.

The firm employs twenty-two individuals across functions including software implementation, client support, GST advisory, finance and administration, and business development. Its internal operations are managed entirely through TallyPrime, making it a case in which the tool sold to clients is also the tool through which the firm manages its own financial records, payroll, compliance, and reporting. This

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integration between the firm's commercial product and its internal operational infrastructure gives the study an additional dimension: the extent to which deep familiarity with a platform translates into comprehensive financial management practice.

7. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

7.1 Accounts Receivable and Payable Management

The firm's accounts receivable process is organised through TallyPrime's invoicing and outstanding report functions. Invoices are raised directly within the system at the point of service delivery or licence transfer, with GST components automatically computed based on the nature of the supply and the registration status of the recipient. A weekly outstanding debtor report is generated and reviewed by the finance team, enabling the identification of overdue accounts and the initiation of follow-up through telephone and electronic communication. Institutional clients, which include registered businesses that engage the firm on service retainer arrangements, are extended a standard thirty-day credit period. Individual clients are required to settle accounts upon delivery of service or software.

This differentiated credit management approach reflects a practical understanding of how different client categories behave. However, it operates without a formal credit risk assessment protocol for new clients. At present, institutional credit terms are extended based on management familiarity and judgement rather than through any structured evaluation of the client's payment history, business standing, or financial position. As the client base grows, the absence of such a protocol could expose the firm to an accumulation of slow-moving or irrecoverable receivables that a basic onboarding assessment would help prevent.

Accounts payable management is conducted with comparable discipline on the payment side. Vendor invoices are entered into Tally Prime upon receipt, and all payments are processed only after management approval has been obtained and recorded. Tax deducted at source is applied to qualifying payments, with the system computing the applicable deduction rate based on vendor type and transaction nature. Outstanding creditor reports are reviewed monthly, a cadence that is adequate at the firm's current transaction volume but would benefit from shifting to weekly reviews as the business scales.

7.2 Payroll and Statutory Compliance

Monthly payroll processing is conducted through TallyPrime's payroll module. The firm's twenty-two employees are remunerated through a combination of fixed monthly salaries for technical, support, and administrative staff and performance-linked incentive structures for business development personnel. TDS deductions under the relevant provisions of the Income Tax Act and provident fund contributions are calculated within the payroll module, and pay slips are generated and distributed digitally through the system. The integration of payroll within the same accounting environment as all other financial transactions eliminates the risk of misalignment between payroll cost entries and the general ledger, a problem commonly encountered in firms that use standalone payroll software disconnected from their primary accounting platform.

GST compliance is maintained to a high standard. Monthly GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B returns are filed without delays, input tax credits are systematically tracked through the purchase ledger, and GST-compliant invoices are generated for all taxable supplies made by the firm. Given that the company's core commercial competence lies in helping clients achieve precisely this level of compliance, it is consistent with expectation that this function should be among its strongest. The firm also monitors its turnover against e-invoicing applicability thresholds and is positioned to implement e-invoicing without operational disruption should it cross the prescribed limit. Quarterly TDS returns are filed on schedule, and TDS certificates are issued to vendors as required.

7.3 Bank Reconciliation and Financial Reporting

Bank reconciliation is performed on a weekly basis using TallyPrime's bank reconciliation module, which matches ledger entries against bank statement transactions and flags unreconciled items for investigation. This weekly frequency is a sound internal control practice that ensures discrepancies, whether arising from timing differences, data entry errors, or unauthorised transactions, are identified and resolved promptly rather than being allowed to accumulate until month-end. The predominantly digital payment environment, with most transactions settled through NEFT or RTGS transfers, substantially reduces the cash handling and cheque management complexities that typically complicate reconciliation in smaller firms. The absence of a formal sign-off documentation protocol, whereby completed reconciliations are authorised by a designated reviewer, represents a gap that would strengthen the internal control framework if introduced.

Financial reporting at the firm encompasses monthly profit and loss statements, weekly outstanding debtor and creditor reports, monthly sales and expense summaries, and GST summary reports generated in advance of each return filing. These outputs are reviewed by management and provide a functional basis for monitoring financial performance from period to period. However, the balance sheet is reviewed only on a quarterly or annual basis, which means that several important balance sheet items, including loan balances, accrued liabilities, fixed asset depreciation schedules, and provisions, do not receive regular management scrutiny. A shift to monthly balance sheet reviews would materially improve the overall reporting framework and management's visibility over the firm's financial position.

7.4 Budgeting and Financial Planning

The most significant deficiency in the firm's financial management framework is located at the planning level. Revenue and expense expectations are established informally at the commencement of each financial year, driven by management judgement and prior year experience rather than by a structured budgeting exercise. These expectations are not documented in a formal budget format with line-item specificity, nor are actual results systematically compared against them to generate variance reports that could inform

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corrective action. Capital expenditure decisions and cash flow planning are handled reactively, as needs arise, rather than through a structured forward-looking process.

For a firm of this size operating in a competitive technology service market, this informal approach to planning carries meaningful risk. Revenue in cloud accounting services is subject to client churn, licensing renewal cycles, and competitive pricing pressures that a formal budget would help anticipate and manage. On the cost side, staff costs, software subscriptions, infrastructure fees, and marketing expenditure require structured planning to ensure that growth in one area does not erode margins elsewhere without management awareness.

Closely related to the budgeting gap is the absence of cash flow forecasting. A service firm that depends on timely client collections to meet monthly payroll and vendor commitments is inherently exposed to short-term liquidity risk if collections slow unexpectedly. A rolling three-to-six month cash flow forecast, updated monthly based on expected receipts and upcoming payment obligations, would give management the forward visibility needed to anticipate and manage working capital pressure before it becomes acute. The necessary data to construct such a forecast is entirely available within TallyPrime; the gap is one of practice rather than technology.

Table 1. Summary Assessment of Financial Management Practices at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech

Practice Area	Current Status	Observed Strength	Improvement Needed
Accounts Receivable	Weekly debtor reports via TallyPrime; differentiated credit terms by client type	Systematic follow-up; automated GST invoicing	No formal credit risk assessment for new clients
Accounts Payable	Management-approved vendor payments; TDS auto-computed in system	TDS compliance embedded in workflow	Monthly creditor reviews; shift to weekly recommended
Payroll Processing	Monthly via TallyPrime payroll module for 22 staff	Accurate statutory deductions; integrated with general ledger	No formal HR-finance reconciliation documentation
GST Compliance	Monthly GSTR-1 and GSTR-3B; quarterly TDS returns	Zero delays in return filing; strong input credit tracking	E-invoicing readiness monitoring required
Bank Reconciliation	Weekly BRS via TallyPrime bank module	Early error detection; digital payment environment reduces risk	No formal sign-off documentation post-reconciliation
Financial Reporting	Monthly P&L; weekly outstanding reports; quarterly balance sheet	MIS reports support management decisions	Balance sheet reviewed too infrequently; monthly recommended
Budgeting & Planning	Informal annual targets set by management judgement	Management awareness of cost levels	No documented budget, variance review, or cash flow forecast

8. FINDINGS

The following principal findings emerge from the study:

6. The firm's transactional accounting and statutory compliance functions are managed with considerable competence. TallyPrime serves as a robust, comprehensively implemented platform for all core financial operations, and the finance team demonstrates strong familiarity with its capabilities.
7. Accounts receivable management benefits from weekly reporting and systematic follow-up procedures, supported by automated invoicing and GST computation. The differentiated credit treatment of institutional and individual clients reflects a practical appreciation of client payment behaviour.
8. Payroll processing is accurate, timely, and well integrated with the firm's general ledger, eliminating the misalignment risks commonly associated with firms using standalone payroll applications.
9. GST and TDS compliance are maintained to a high standard, consistent with the firm's role as an expert in these areas for its client base. Return filing is punctual, input credit tracking is systematic, and the firm is monitoring its e-invoicing threshold exposure.
10. The most significant gap in the firm's financial management framework is the absence of formal budgeting, documented variance review, and cash flow forecasting. This limits management's ability to anticipate and respond to financial risks before they materialise.
11. Balance sheet review frequency is insufficient. Quarterly or annual review of balance sheet items means that important financial positions, including loan obligations, accrued liabilities, and depreciation, do not receive regular management attention.

9. SUGGESTIONS

On the basis of the findings, the following recommendations are offered to the management of Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech:

12. A formal annual budget with line-item revenue and expenditure targets should be prepared at the commencement of each financial year. Given that all necessary data is already available within TallyPrime, the incremental effort required to formalise this process is minimal. Monthly comparison of actuals against the budget would generate variance reports that management can act upon promptly.

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13. A rolling cash flow forecast covering three to six months should be prepared and updated monthly based on expected client collections and upcoming payment commitments. This forward-looking tool would significantly reduce the firm's exposure to unanticipated working capital shortfalls.
14. A formal credit risk assessment protocol should be introduced for new institutional clients before credit terms are extended. A simple checklist covering payment history, business registration status, and reference verification would reduce the risk of problematic receivables accumulating as the client base grows.
15. Balance sheet review should be elevated to a monthly frequency. Monthly review of asset values, loan balances, accrued liabilities, and provisions would give management a materially better understanding of the firm's overall financial position.
16. A formal sign-off procedure for completed bank reconciliations should be introduced, whereby a designated reviewer approves and documents each reconciliation. This would strengthen the internal control framework and create an audit trail that is currently absent.
17. As the business grows, a shift to weekly accounts payable review cycles is advisable to ensure that creditor management keeps pace with transaction volume and that payment timing is managed strategically to optimise cash flow.

10. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations should be noted when interpreting the findings of this study:

- The study is based on a single organisation and is not designed to generate findings generalisable to other firms or contexts.
- Access to detailed financial data was limited by the firm's confidentiality requirements. Specific revenue, profit, and expenditure figures were not disclosed.
- The study was conducted over a defined project period of approximately three months and may not capture seasonal or cyclical variations in the firm's financial operations.
- The research relies on direct observation and structured interaction rather than a statistically validated survey instrument, which means that some practices may be described as observed rather than as independently verified.

11. CONCLUSION

This study examined the financial management and accounting operations at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech, an authorised Tally solutions provider employing twenty-two staff in Gudiyatham, Tamil Nadu. The investigation was conducted over the period from January to March 2026 and was designed to evaluate the firm's practices across accounts receivable and payable management, payroll processing, GST and TDS compliance, bank reconciliation, financial reporting, and budgeting.

The findings present a differentiated picture. At the operational and compliance levels, the firm performs with considerable competence. Its TallyPrime implementation is comprehensive and well used, GST and TDS compliance is among the firm's strongest functions, payroll processing is integrated and accurate, and bank reconciliation is conducted with a weekly frequency that constitutes sound internal control practice. These strengths reflect both the firm's technical familiarity with TallyPrime and the compliance discipline that the GST framework has imposed across the sector.

At the planning and governance level, however, the firm exhibits gaps that are characteristic of small enterprises more broadly. The absence of formal budgeting and variance review, the lack of cash flow forecasting, and the infrequency of balance sheet monitoring limit the firm's capacity for proactive financial management. These are not gaps that require new technology or significant additional resources to address; they require deliberate management commitment to introduce structured planning disciplines alongside the operational processes that are already functioning well.

The study's central contribution lies in demonstrating that cloud accounting technology creates a necessary but not sufficient condition for financial management maturity. Firms that complement strong transactional systems with formal planning processes are better positioned to grow sustainably, manage risk proactively, and maintain the confidence of their clients and stakeholders. Future research extending this inquiry to a comparative study of multiple Tally partner firms across Tamil Nadu would help establish whether the patterns observed at Tally Cloud9 Soft Tech are representative of the sector more broadly.

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