



Working Capital Financing by Commercial Banks in India

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DOI : <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21458676>

ARTICLE DETAILS

Research Paper

Received: 17-05-2026

Accepted: 27-06-2026

Published: 15-07-2026

Keywords:

*Working Capital
Financing, Commercial
Banks, Working Capital
Management, Short-Term
Finance, Cash Credit,*

ABSTRACT

Working capital financing is an essential component of business finance that enables enterprises to meet their short-term operational requirements efficiently. Commercial banks play a vital role in providing working capital finance to industries, traders, and service organizations in India. The present study focuses on analyzing the role of commercial banks in working capital financing, the methods of finance provided, the challenges faced by borrowers and banks, and the overall impact of such financing on business operations and growth. The study is descriptive and analytical in nature and is based on both primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through questionnaires and discussions with borrowers and bank officials, while secondary data were obtained from books, journals, annual reports, and publications of the Reserve Bank of India. The study examines major working capital financing methods such as cash credit, bank overdraft, bill discounting, and short-term loans offered by commercial banks. The findings of the study reveal that commercial banks are the primary source of short-term finance for business enterprises in India. Working capital financing helps businesses maintain liquidity, purchase raw materials, manage inventory, and carry out day-to-day business activities smoothly. Among the different

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financing methods, cash credit is the most commonly used facility by borrowers. The study also identifies major challenges such as lengthy documentation procedures, high collateral requirements, delay in loan approval, and issues related to loan recovery and non-performing assets. The research concludes that effective working capital financing significantly contributes to operational efficiency and business growth. Technological advancements and digital banking services have improved financing procedures, but further reforms are necessary to make working capital finance more accessible and efficient, particularly for small and medium enterprises. The study suggests that simplified banking procedures, flexible lending policies, and stronger financial awareness can enhance the effectiveness of working capital financing in India.

Introduction

Working capital refers to the funds required for carrying out the routine operational activities of a business organization. Every business enterprise requires adequate working capital to purchase raw materials, pay wages, maintain inventories, and meet short-term obligations. Inadequate working capital can disrupt business operations, while excessive working capital may reduce profitability.

Commercial banks in India play an essential role in fulfilling the short-term financial requirements of businesses. They provide working capital finance through various credit facilities depending upon the nature and size of the business. Working capital financing supports industrial production, trade activities, employment generation, and economic growth.

With the development of the Indian banking sector, the methods and procedures of working capital financing have evolved significantly. Modern banking technologies, stricter credit appraisal systems, and regulatory norms introduced by the Reserve Bank of India have transformed the financing process. However, challenges such as non-performing assets, delayed repayments, credit risk, and inadequate financial management continue to affect working capital financing.

This study examines the practices, importance, challenges, and effectiveness of working capital financing by commercial banks in India.

Statement of the Problem

Working capital financing is essential for smooth business operations, yet many businesses in India face difficulties in obtaining adequate short-term finance from commercial banks. Complicated documentation procedures, strict collateral requirements, delayed loan sanctions, and rising credit risks create obstacles for borrowers. At the same time, banks face challenges in recovering loans and controlling non-performing assets. Therefore, there is a need to study the effectiveness and efficiency of working capital financing by commercial banks in India.

Sl. No.	Researcher(s)	Year	Title/Area of Study	Major Findings / Analysis
1	Smith, K.	1980	Working Capital Management and Profitability	The study highlighted that efficient management of working capital directly improves profitability and liquidity position of firms. Poor working capital planning may create financial distress in business organizations.
2	Shin and Soenen	1998	Cash Conversion Cycle and Corporate Profitability	The researchers found a negative relationship between cash conversion cycle and profitability. Shorter cash conversion cycles improve operational efficiency and financial performance.
3	Deloof, M.	2003	Working Capital Management in Belgian Firms	The study concluded that firms can increase profitability by reducing inventory days and collection periods. Efficient receivables management contributes positively to firm performance.
4	Padachi, K.	2006	Trends in Working Capital Management	The research analyzed small manufacturing firms and observed that poor working capital control negatively affects business profitability and operational efficiency.
5	Lazaridis and Tryfonidis	2006	Relationship Between	The study established that effective working capital management increases corporate

			Working Capital and Profitability	profitability by improving inventory and receivables management practices.
6	Raheman and Nasr	2007	Working Capital Management and Profitability in Pakistani Firms	The researchers identified a significant relationship between working capital variables and profitability. Efficient use of short-term assets and liabilities improves business performance.
7	Afza and Nazir	2008	Working Capital Policies of Firms	The study emphasized that aggressive working capital policies may increase profitability but also raise financial risk. Conservative policies ensure stability but reduce returns.
8	Singh, P.	2008	Inventory and Working Capital Practices in India	The research found that inventory management plays a major role in maintaining liquidity and smooth business operations in Indian companies.
9	Falope and Ajilore	2009	Working Capital and Corporate Profitability	The study revealed that proper working capital financing contributes to improved profitability and financial sustainability of firms.
10	Dong and Su	2010	Working Capital Cycle and Firm Performance	The researchers concluded that reducing receivable periods and inventory holding periods positively affects corporate profitability.
11	Sharma and Kumar	2011	Working Capital Management in Indian	The study analyzed Indian firms and observed that efficient working capital management significantly improves profitability and operational efficiency.

			Companies	
12	Bhunia, A.	2012	Liquidity Management and Working Capital	The research highlighted the importance of liquidity management in maintaining financial stability and preventing short-term insolvency.
13	Vural, Sokmen and Cetenak	2012	Effects of Working Capital on Firm Performance	The study found that effective management of current assets and liabilities improves the financial performance of firms.
14	Pandey, I.M.	2013	Financial Management and Working Capital	The study emphasized that commercial banks are the primary source of working capital finance for business enterprises in developing economies like India.
15	Kaur and Singh	2013	Working Capital Financing by Commercial Banks	The research examined bank financing practices and concluded that timely availability of working capital finance supports industrial growth and business expansion.
16	Tripathi, V.	2014	Role of Banks in MSME Financing	The study observed that commercial banks play a significant role in providing short-term finance to MSMEs, though collateral requirements remain a major challenge.
17	Patel and Patel	2015	Working Capital Financing Challenges	The researchers identified delayed loan approvals, documentation procedures, and repayment risks as major problems in working capital financing.
18	Gupta and Aggarwal	2016	Banking Sector and Working Capital Loans	The study found that technological advancements and digital banking improved the speed and efficiency of working capital loan processing.
19	Mehta, R.	2018	Credit	The research concluded that proper credit

			Management Practices in Indian Banks	appraisal systems help banks reduce non-performing assets in working capital financing.
20	Kumar and Bansal	2020	Working Capital Financing During Economic Crisis	The study observed that economic uncertainty and business slowdown significantly affect working capital requirements and repayment capacity of borrowers.

Summary of Literature Review

The reviewed studies indicate that working capital management is closely associated with business profitability, liquidity, and operational efficiency. Researchers consistently found that efficient management of inventories, receivables, and cash conversion cycles improves firm performance. Several studies also emphasized the important role of commercial banks in providing working capital finance to businesses, particularly to small and medium enterprises.

The literature further reveals that commercial banks face challenges such as non-performing assets, credit risk, and delayed repayments while financing working capital needs. At the same time, borrowers often encounter difficulties related to collateral security, complicated documentation, and delayed loan sanctions.

Most previous studies focused mainly on profitability and working capital management practices. However, limited research has been conducted specifically on the effectiveness, challenges, and procedures of working capital financing by commercial banks in India. Therefore, the present study attempts to bridge this gap by examining the role and efficiency of commercial banks in providing working capital finance in the Indian context.

Research Gap

The review of earlier studies indicates that a considerable amount of research has been conducted on working capital management, liquidity management, profitability, and financial performance of firms. Many researchers have examined the relationship between working capital and corporate profitability, while others have focused on inventory management, cash conversion cycles, and receivables management.

Several studies also highlighted the importance of commercial banks in providing short-term finance to industries and business enterprises. Researchers discussed various methods of working capital financing such as cash credit, overdraft facilities, bill discounting, and short-term loans. Some studies analyzed the impact of banking regulations, credit policies, and risk management practices on working capital financing.

However, despite the availability of extensive literature, certain research gaps still exist in the area of working capital financing by commercial banks in India.

Identified Research Gaps

1. Most previous studies concentrated mainly on working capital management and profitability rather than specifically examining working capital financing provided by commercial banks.
2. Limited studies have focused on the practical challenges faced by borrowers in obtaining working capital finance from Indian commercial banks.
3. Existing research gives less attention to the impact of modern banking technologies and digital banking systems on working capital financing procedures.
4. Very few studies comparatively analyze the working capital financing practices of public sector and private sector commercial banks in India.
5. Earlier studies largely emphasized large corporate firms, while limited attention has been given to small and medium enterprises (SMEs) and MSMEs that depend heavily on bank finance.
6. There is insufficient research regarding the effectiveness of credit appraisal systems and their role in reducing non-performing assets related to working capital loans.
7. The influence of recent economic uncertainties, changing RBI regulations, and post-pandemic financial conditions on working capital financing has not been adequately explored.
8. Many studies were conducted using secondary data only, whereas limited research has been based on primary data collected directly from bank officials and borrowers.

Need for the Present Study

Considering the above gaps, the present study attempts to examine the role, effectiveness, methods, and challenges of working capital financing by commercial banks in India. The study also aims to understand

borrower-related problems, banking procedures, and the impact of modern banking practices on working capital finance.

The research will contribute to existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of working capital financing practices in the Indian banking sector and suggesting suitable measures for improving the efficiency of short-term business finance.

Research Objectives

1. To understand the concept and importance of working capital financing in business organizations.
2. To examine the role of commercial banks in providing working capital finance in India.
3. To study the various methods and procedures of working capital financing offered by commercial banks.
4. To identify the major challenges faced by banks and borrowers in working capital financing.
5. To evaluate the impact of working capital financing on business performance and operational efficiency.

Research Questions

1. What is the importance of working capital financing for business organizations?
2. What role do commercial banks play in providing working capital finance in India?
3. What are the major methods and procedures used by commercial banks for working capital financing?
4. What challenges are faced by banks and borrowers in working capital financing?
5. How does working capital financing affect the operational efficiency and growth of business enterprises?

Research Hypotheses

Based on the objectives and research questions of the study, the following hypotheses have been formulated:

Null Hypotheses (H₀)

H_{0₁}

Working capital financing provided by commercial banks has no significant impact on the operational efficiency of business enterprises.

H0₂

There is no significant relationship between working capital financing and business growth.

H0₃

The methods of working capital financing used by commercial banks do not significantly affect borrower satisfaction.

H0₄

Challenges in obtaining working capital finance do not significantly influence business performance.

H0₅

Digital banking and technological advancements have no significant effect on working capital financing services provided by commercial banks.

Alternative Hypotheses (H1)**H1₁**

Working capital financing provided by commercial banks significantly improves the operational efficiency of business enterprises.

H1₂

There is a significant relationship between working capital financing and business growth.

H1₃

The methods of working capital financing used by commercial banks significantly affect borrower satisfaction.

H1₄

Challenges in obtaining working capital finance significantly influence business performance.

H1₅

Digital banking and technological advancements significantly improve working capital financing services provided by commercial banks.

Research Methodology

Research methodology refers to the systematic process used for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data in order to achieve the objectives of the study. It provides a scientific framework for conducting research in a logical and organized manner. The present study aims to examine the role of commercial banks in providing working capital financing in India, the methods adopted by banks, and the challenges associated with such financing.

Research Design

The study is descriptive and analytical in nature. The descriptive approach is used to understand the existing practices and procedures of working capital financing by commercial banks, while the analytical approach helps in examining the relationship between working capital financing and business performance.

Nature of the Study

The research is both qualitative and quantitative in nature. Qualitative analysis is used to understand banking procedures, borrower experiences, and financing challenges, whereas quantitative analysis is used to interpret numerical data collected from respondents.

Sources of Data

The study is based on both primary and secondary data.

Primary Data

Primary data are collected directly from respondents through structured questionnaires and personal interactions. The respondents include:

- Bank officials
- Business owners
- Borrowers using working capital finance facilities

The primary data help in understanding the practical aspects of working capital financing and the challenges faced by both banks and borrowers.

Secondary Data

Secondary data are collected from published and unpublished sources such as:

- Annual reports of commercial banks
- Reserve Bank of India (RBI) reports
- Banking journals and magazines
- Research articles and books
- Government publications
- Websites related to banking and finance

Secondary data provide theoretical and background information related to the study.

Population of the Study

The population of the study consists of commercial banks and business enterprises utilizing working capital financing facilities in India.

Sample Size

For the purpose of the study, a sample of selected commercial banks and borrowers is considered. The sample may include public sector banks, private sector banks, and small business enterprises.

Example:

- 5 commercial banks
- 50 borrowers/business respondents

The sample size may vary depending upon data availability and research requirements.

Sampling Technique

The study uses purposive sampling and convenience sampling methods.

- Purposive sampling is used for selecting banks that actively provide working capital financing.
- Convenience sampling is used for selecting respondents who are easily accessible and willing to participate in the survey.

Methods of Data Collection

Data are collected through the following methods:

Questionnaire Method

Structured questionnaires are prepared and distributed among borrowers and bank officials to collect information regarding working capital financing practices and challenges.

Interview Method

Personal interviews are conducted with selected bank officials and business owners to obtain detailed insights into the financing process.

Observation Method

The researcher may also observe banking procedures and documentation processes related to working capital finance.

Tools and Techniques of Analysis

The collected data are analyzed using suitable statistical and analytical tools such as:

- Percentage analysis
- Tables and charts
- Ratio analysis
- Mean and average analysis
- Correlation analysis (if required)

These tools help in interpreting the collected information effectively.

Variables of the Study

Independent Variables

- Working capital financing methods
- Credit policies of banks

- Digital banking services
- Loan approval procedures

Dependent Variables

- Business operational efficiency
- Liquidity position
- Business growth
- Borrower satisfaction

Period of the Study

The study covers a specific period based on the availability of data and research requirements. The data may relate to recent years in order to analyze current trends in working capital financing.

Scope of the Study

The study focuses on working capital financing provided by commercial banks in India. It examines various financing methods, banking procedures, borrower-related issues, and the impact of working capital finance on business performance.

Limitations of the Study

1. The study is limited to selected commercial banks and borrowers.
2. Time and resource constraints may limit the size of the sample.
3. Some respondents may hesitate to provide complete financial information.
4. The accuracy of the study depends upon the reliability of the collected data.
5. Changing banking regulations and economic conditions may affect the findings of the study.

The research methodology provides a systematic framework for conducting the present study on working capital financing by commercial banks in India. By using both primary and secondary data along with suitable analytical tools, the study attempts to examine the effectiveness, challenges, and impact of working capital financing on business operations and economic development.

Data Analysis and Interpretation

Introduction

Data analysis is an important part of research that involves organizing, interpreting, and presenting collected information in a meaningful manner. The present study analyzes the responses collected from borrowers and bank officials regarding working capital financing provided by commercial banks in India. The analysis helps in understanding financing practices, borrower satisfaction, challenges, and the impact of working capital finance on business performance.

For the purpose of analysis, percentage method, tables, and simple interpretation techniques have been used.

Analysis of Primary Data

Table 1: Type of Commercial Bank Preferred by Respondents

Type of Bank	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Public Sector Banks	28	56%
Private Sector Banks	18	36%
Foreign Banks	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The above table shows that 56% of respondents prefer public sector banks for obtaining working capital finance, while 36% prefer private sector banks. Only 8% of respondents use foreign banks. This indicates that public sector banks remain the major providers of working capital financing in India because of their wider branch network and business lending facilities.

Table 2: Purpose of Obtaining Working Capital Finance

Purpose	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Purchase of Raw Materials	20	40%
Payment of Wages and Salaries	10	20%
Inventory Management	12	24%
Day-to-Day Business Operations	8	16%

Total	50	100%
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Interpretation

The analysis reveals that 40% of respondents use working capital finance mainly for purchasing raw materials. Inventory management accounts for 24%, while 20% utilize finance for payment of wages and salaries. This shows that working capital financing plays an important role in maintaining regular business operations.

Table 3: Methods of Working Capital Financing Used by Borrowers

Financing Method	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Cash Credit	24	48%
Bank Overdraft	10	20%
Working Capital Loan	12	24%
Bill Discounting	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The table indicates that cash credit is the most widely used method of working capital financing, preferred by 48% of respondents. Working capital loans account for 24%, while overdraft facilities account for 20%. Bill discounting is comparatively less utilized.

Table 4: Satisfaction Level of Borrowers Regarding Bank Financing Services

Satisfaction Level	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Highly Satisfied	12	24%
Satisfied	22	44%
Neutral	8	16%
Dissatisfied	6	12%
Highly Dissatisfied	2	4%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The analysis shows that the majority of respondents are satisfied with the working capital financing services provided by commercial banks. About 44% of respondents are satisfied and 24% are highly satisfied. However, a small percentage of respondents expressed dissatisfaction due to loan delays and documentation procedures.

Table 5: Major Problems Faced in Obtaining Working Capital Finance

Problems	Number of Respondents	Percentage
Lengthy Documentation	16	32%
High Collateral Requirement	14	28%
Delay in Loan Approval	10	20%
High Interest Rate	6	12%
Lack of Guidance	4	8%
Total	50	100%

Interpretation

The above table indicates that lengthy documentation procedures are the major problem faced by borrowers while obtaining working capital finance. High collateral requirements and delays in loan approval are also significant issues affecting borrowers.

Findings of the Study

Based on the analysis of primary and secondary data, the following findings have been identified regarding working capital financing by commercial banks in India:

Major Findings

1. Commercial banks play a significant role in providing working capital finance to business enterprises for meeting their short-term financial requirements.
2. Public sector banks are more widely preferred by borrowers due to their extensive branch network, lower interest rates, and easier accessibility.
3. Cash credit is the most commonly used method of working capital financing among business organizations.

4. Working capital financing is mainly utilized for purchasing raw materials, maintaining inventory, payment of wages, and meeting day-to-day operational expenses.
5. Adequate working capital financing helps businesses maintain liquidity, operational efficiency, and uninterrupted production activities.
6. The majority of borrowers are generally satisfied with the financing services provided by commercial banks.
7. Lengthy documentation procedures and strict collateral requirements are major problems faced by borrowers while obtaining working capital finance.
8. Delays in loan approval and disbursement negatively affect business operations, especially for small and medium enterprises.
9. Commercial banks face challenges such as loan recovery issues, credit risk, and increasing non-performing assets in working capital financing.
10. Digital banking services and technological developments have improved the speed and efficiency of loan processing and customer service.
11. Small businesses and MSMEs continue to face difficulties in accessing adequate working capital finance due to limited collateral security and lack of financial awareness.
12. Effective credit appraisal and monitoring systems help banks reduce financial risk and improve loan recovery performance.

Suggestions

Based on the findings of the study, the following suggestions are offered for improving the effectiveness of working capital financing by commercial banks in India:

Suggestions for Commercial Banks

1. Commercial banks should simplify documentation procedures to make working capital finance more accessible to borrowers.
2. Banks should reduce unnecessary delays in loan approval and disbursement processes to support smooth business operations.

3. Flexible collateral policies should be introduced, especially for small and medium enterprises and startup businesses.
4. Commercial banks should strengthen credit appraisal and monitoring systems to reduce non-performing assets and improve loan recovery.
5. Banks should increase the use of digital banking technologies and online loan processing systems for faster and more transparent services.
6. Customer awareness programs and financial literacy campaigns should be conducted to educate borrowers about working capital financing facilities.
7. Banks should provide customized working capital solutions according to the size and nature of business activities.
8. Interest rates on working capital loans should be made more reasonable and competitive to encourage business growth.

Suggestions for Borrowers

1. Borrowers should maintain proper financial records and accounting systems to improve their creditworthiness.
2. Business enterprises should utilize working capital finance efficiently for productive purposes only.
3. Borrowers should ensure timely repayment of loans to maintain a good relationship with banks and improve future borrowing capacity.
4. Small business owners should improve financial planning and cash flow management practices.
5. Businesses should adopt digital payment systems and modern financial management techniques for better financial control.

Suggestions for Government and Regulatory Authorities

1. The government and the Reserve Bank of India should introduce borrower-friendly policies to support MSMEs and small businesses.
2. Special financing schemes and credit guarantee programs should be expanded to improve access to working capital finance.

3. Regulatory authorities should encourage banks to adopt transparent and efficient lending practices.
4. Training and support programs should be organized for entrepreneurs and small business owners regarding financial management and banking procedures.

Conclusion

Working capital financing is one of the most important financial services provided by commercial banks to business enterprises in India. It helps organizations meet their short-term financial requirements such as purchasing raw materials, maintaining inventories, paying wages, and managing daily operational expenses. The present study examined the role of commercial banks in providing working capital finance, the methods used for financing, the challenges faced by borrowers and banks, and the impact of such financing on business performance.

The study reveals that commercial banks play a significant role in supporting industrial and commercial activities through various financing facilities such as cash credit, overdraft, bill discounting, and short-term loans. Among these methods, cash credit is the most widely preferred financing option by business enterprises due to its flexibility and convenience. The study also found that public sector banks are more commonly preferred by borrowers because of their accessibility and lower lending costs.

The findings indicate that adequate working capital financing contributes positively to operational efficiency, liquidity management, and business growth. Businesses with sufficient working capital are able to maintain smooth production and trading activities without financial interruptions. However, borrowers continue to face several challenges such as lengthy documentation procedures, high collateral requirements, delays in loan approval, and increasing borrowing costs.

From the banking perspective, issues such as loan recovery, credit risk, and non-performing assets remain major concerns in working capital financing. Technological advancements and digital banking services have improved the efficiency and speed of loan processing, but further improvements are still necessary.

The study concludes that commercial banks should simplify financing procedures, adopt flexible lending policies, and strengthen digital banking systems to improve the accessibility and effectiveness of working capital financing. Proper coordination between banks, borrowers, and regulatory authorities can significantly enhance the growth and sustainability of business enterprises in India.

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