

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
**SCHOOL OF EDUCATION**  
**SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES**  
**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**TOPIC:**

**MANAGING PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS IN GHANA: A  
SURVEY OF SELECTED MINISTRIES**

**BY:**  
**DOREEN ADANUVOR**  
**(10354462)**

**THIS THESIS IS SUBMITTED TO THE UNIVERSITY OF  
GHANA, LEGON, IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE  
REQUIREMENT FOR THE AWARD OF MPhil IN  
INFORMATION STUDIES DEGREE**

**OCTOBER, 2020**

## DECLARATION


I hereby declare that, except for references to other authors' work which have been duly acknowledged, this work is as a result of my own original work and presented to the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

  
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**DOREEN ADANUVOR**  
**(STUDENT)**

  
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**DATE**

  
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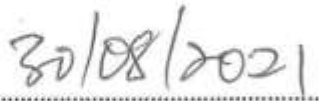
**DR. EDWINA ASHIE-NIKOI**  
**(PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR)**

  
.....

**DATE**

  
.....

**DR. MUSAH ADAMS**  
**(CO-SUPERVISOR)**

  
.....

**DATE**

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this scholarly work to my parents, sister and friends for their unflinching support and prayers.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

My foremost gratitude goes to the almighty God for his guidance and strength which gave me the courage to complete this work.

I wish to acknowledge my supervisors, Dr. Edwina Ashie-Nikoi and Dr. Musah Adams for their patience, time, constructive criticisms, suggestions and tremendous contributions throughout the period of this study. I shall forever be grateful for the support.

My gratitude also goes to the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana for offering me the opportunity to pursue this higher degree for further knowledge.

My sincere appreciation to my father and sister, John Adanuvor and Emelia Adanuvor for their significant care and support through this study.

Lastly, I am thankful to my friends for their encouragement and motivation.

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## **LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

CSTS	- Civil Service Training School
IRMT	- International Records Management Trust
OHCS	- Office of the Head of Civil Service
PRAAD	- Public Records and Archives Administration Department

## **ABSTRACT**

Records are vital in every organization. Efficient records management enhances transparency, accountability and efficient service delivery. The study investigated the management of public sector records in some selected ministries in Ghana. The study focused on professional and sub-professional records officers specifically in fourteen ministries. The professional class are records personnel with educational qualification from degree to post graduate while the sub-professional class are officers with diploma, West African Senior School Certificate Examination (WASSCE) and Ordinary and Advanced level holders. The ministries included Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MOFARI), Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Works and Housing, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Attorney General and Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Roads and Highways, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Railways and Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development. The study was based on the following objectives; to assess the role of records management policies and strategies in the managing records in the ministries, to assess the processes that were employed to make public records accessible, to find out methods used to preserve records in the ministries, to ascertain the skills of those in charge of the management of records, to identify barriers associated with the management of records, to make recommendations based on the findings of the study. A survey research design was used to carry out the study. A total of 120 participants was used for the study. A total of 120 copies of questionnaires were administered proportionally and 100 were successfully retrieved. The Study was guided by the modified records life cycle process. The findings revealed that ministries in Ghana did not have records management policies that regulated their activities, thus placing the direction of records management under the control of the Administration. Under the strategies used in managing records, the study revealed the classification systems used for records, the categories of records kept, the format of

records and storage conditions for records. Also, the study revealed that most ministries did not have a written disaster management plan to follow in dealing with disasters, but they periodically fumigated their records offices to prevent the infestation of documents as a form of preservation and also had adequate space to keep records. Steel drawers, wooden cabinets and metal shelves were used for keeping records. Further, the study revealed that most records staff had no formal training in records or archives management. Training received was in the form of on-the-job training, workshops and seminars. Training needs of the records staff identified included management of electronic records. However, effective records management revealed through the study was beset with many barriers including budget constraints, lack of infrastructure, lack of skilled records staff, resistance to change, and lack of management support. To improve good records management practices that will ensure good standards and service delivery, the study has made some recommendations. With regards to ensuring good standards and practices, the ministries should liaise with PRAAD to develop a records management policy as well as a procedure manual to outline the procedures and practices for managing records throughout their life cycle. The ministries should liaise with PRAAD and the Civil Service Training Centre to organize training programmes for records staff. The study recommends that management should fully support the work of records staff with adequate funds to perform their functions effectively.

# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background to the Study

Record keeping is a fundamental activity of public administration. Without records there can be no rule of law or accountability. Decision makers must have information to carry out their work and records represent a particular and crucial source of information. Records actually provide reliable and legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and actions. They often document compliance or non-compliance with laws, rules and procedures. Most often, the conduct of most civil servants employed to protect records hardly comply with standard policies. Duose (2009), confirmed that, if public officers keep their records correctly, the records would always be there to show the situation as it is. He added that one cannot talk about good governance, democracy and rule of law when records are not kept properly. In the light of the above, it is important for heads of institutions to train records staff to carry out the objectives of the institution.

The International Organization for Standardization on information and documentation, ISO 15489 (2016) defines records as information created, received, and maintained as evidence and as an asset by an organization or person, in pursuit of legal obligations or in the transaction of business.

According to Schellenberg (1956) as cited in Amo,(2016), records are “all books, papers, maps, photographs, or other documentary materials, regardless of physical form or characteristics, made or received by any public or private institution in pursuance of its legal obligations or in connection with the transaction of its proper business and preserved or appropriate for preservation by that institution or its legitimate successor as evidence of its functions, policies, decisions, procedures, operations, or other activities or because of the informational value of data contained therein.”

Shepherd (2006), postulates that, organizations use records to support accountability, when they need to prove that they have met their obligations or complied with best practice or established policies. Heightened awareness about the importance of a proper record management system would go a long way to improve the practice of good recordkeeping by practitioners at the various public institutions considering the numerous benefits their institutions stand to benefit if they can be held accountable for their actions while discharging their duties.

Kennedy and Schauder (1998) as cited in Karbo, (2009) also affirm that government entities and their employees have to be aware of their legal and regulatory obligations in order to be able to present sufficient proof of their fulfilment of the regulatory requirements in the record of their activities. Government institutions play very important developmental roles in building Ghana by providing very vital services for the general good of the economy. Therefore, there is a need for efficient records management at the various sections and departments of all government institutions to protect records against disasters and unauthorised access in order to help decision makers in planning, strategising and advancing institutional accountability and best practice.

### **1.1.2 Public Sector Institutions in Ghana**

Public organisations are monopolies that serve the interest of the citizenry and are driven directly or indirectly by Government. Public sector work is handled by government because they have majority shares in it. They provide services like education, transport, healthcare services, roads, water and other essential services. State organisations as they are popularly called, are more rigid due to the process of decision making and implementation. Unfortunately, public organisations are sometimes poorly funded more or less (Mihaiu et al., 2010) and this may affect their efficiency levels. There are numerous reasons that emphasize the need for public sector efficiency: government expenditure is found to have negative effect on economic growth, hence

government should focus on lowering spending and accomplishing more with fewer resources; difficulties in collecting revenues; and excessive borrowing from developed countries (Afonso, Schuknecht, & Tanzi, 2006).

As at January 2020, there were thirty-eight ministries in Ghana which serve as the headquarters of all public sector institutions. These include departments and agencies under the ministries. Records are generated on daily basis either by electronic or conventional means in public sector institutions. The information generated is used as evidence, decisions, procedures and transactions for their operations by organizations. The responsibilities of heads of public institutions in respect to records management is to establish good recordkeeping practices within their records offices for the management of public records in relation with the standards directed by the Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD). These standards according to PRAAD Act 535 of 1997 include having appropriate systems for the creation and management of current records; implementation of retention schedules and transfer of semi-current records into the custody of PRAAD. PRAAD has a role in ensuring effective and efficient records management practices in public sector institutions.

Records are vital in every organization for the conduct of its operations. Records personnel are responsible for handling and managing records from the creation stage to the disposition stage. Their functions include classifying, arranging, describing and making records accessible for use when needed. In Ghana, records personnel are considered under the records class of the civil service scheme of service. They are professionals who have been given formal training or education in records management. They are classified under professionals and sub-professional records officers. The professionals are personnel with educational qualifications from degree to post graduate whereas the sub-professionals are considered to have diplomas, West African

senior school certificate examination (WASSCE) and Ordinary Advanced Level holders (O' Level).

## **1.2 Statement of the Problem**

One of the important provisions of Ghana's Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD), Act 535 of 1997 is that heads of public institutions should ensure the proper management of their records. This is carried out by designating responsibility for records management to authorized officers. Without a records manager to co-ordinate the management of records in all formats, it is impossible to implement and sustain sound records management practices. The records manager is responsible for all aspects of records management, including the design, implementation and maintenance of records classification systems and record systems as well as for training of all employees regarding the application of sound records management in a ministry.

Records management is often overlooked though it plays a very significant role in the day to day running of every institution. Studies conducted in South Africa by Venter (2004) on records management by the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARS) during the 2003/2004 financial year in government departments of all nine provinces revealed that record keeping had declined to the point where it was seriously hampering the conduct of government business and undermining basic accountability to the public. The survey further revealed that, there was no top management support for records management functions in the departments, which resulted in the records managers not having the necessary authority or backing to enforce proper records management practices.

Various studies from other African countries show that most governments pay little attention to the management of records in both paper and electronic formats, thus hindering the effectiveness

of the public sector in enhancing service delivery, promoting efficiency, accountability and good governance (Kargbo, 2009; Kemoni, 2007; Mnjama, 2004; Moloji and Mutula, 2007; Mutula and Wamukoya, 2009).

Similarly, Amo's (2016) study which focused on records management in public hospital as part of the public sector in Ghana also revealed similar results. It is evident that most personnel in the various institutions who work on records lack the proper expertise in records handling and management therefore making it difficult for trained records staff to properly archive records after their use. The study is further spurred by the fact that although much research has been conducted on the management of records in Africa, few pertain to Ghana. Further, the few studies on records management in public sector in Ghana were focused on individual ministries. Record keeping in public institutions especially Africa and for that matter Ghana has not been prioritized as a core management function as evidenced by the fact that many studies conducted in government ministries have concluded that many public institutions have not identified their vital records. However, whether organisations see the need to protect their records by identifying vital records and having records management programmes in place is one of the problems to be investigated. It is against this background that the researcher finds this research crucial to embark on.

### **1.3 Purpose of the Study**

The purpose of the study is to examine how records are managed in the public sector institutions in Ghana.

## **1.4 Objectives of the Study**

The specific objectives of the study are

- i. To assess the role of records management policies and strategies in the management of public sector records in the ministries.
- ii. To assess the processes that are employed to make public records accessible.
- iii. To determine methods used to preserve records in the public sector ministries.
- iv. To ascertain the skills of those in charge of the management of records.
- v. To identify barriers associated with the management of records.
- vi. To make recommendations based on the findings of the study.

## **1.5 Theoretical Framework of the Study**

This section provides the theoretical framework and the models which guided this study.

A theoretical framework is a conceptual model of how one theorizes or makes logical sense of the relationships among the several factors that have been identified as important to the problem (Sekaran, 2003). Generally, the theoretical framework discusses the interrelationships among the variables that are deemed to be integral to the dynamics of the situation being investigated. From the theoretical framework, therefore, testable hypotheses can be developed to examine whether the theory formulated is valid or not (Sekaran 2003). The purpose of a theoretical framework is to make research findings meaningful and generalizable. They help to stimulate research and the extension of knowledge by providing both direction and impetus (Polit & Beck 2004).

The modified records life cycle model was chosen to underpin this study. The records life cycle and records continuum are the dominant models in the archival and records management field (Chachage & Ngulube 2006). However, the International Records Management Trust (IRMT 1999) postulated an integrated approach to records management, in which the life-cycle and continuum models are blended in an integrated records and archives management system.

Further, Shepherd and Yeo (2003) refashioned the life cycle concept using the entity life history developed by Jackson in 1983.

According to Williams (2006) the modified records life cycle model is useful because it enables archivists and records managers to track, in a sequential process as seen in Table 1.1, the progress of a record and to ensure that the right processes are undertaken at each phase of its life.

**Table 1.1: The modified records life cycle processes**

Phase	Considerations	Processes
Gestation (prenatal phase)	Does this activity need recording?	Decisions about its form, content, life span – before it is created
Creation and capture	Records are created/received and captured in a recordkeeping system	Application of appropriate metadata (descriptive information about the record's context); systematic capture
Active life	Record is referred to frequently	Appropriate access, storage, retrieval, security, preservation, appraisal, some destruction
Semi-active life	Record is referred to infrequently	Less access, retrieval, off-site storage, appraisal, some destruction
Archive	Records accessed as archives, for non-current purposes	Archival standard storage and access: a further cycle of processes

Source: Williams (2006)

Since the life cycle processes presented by Williams (2006) included the gestation (prenatal phase), the researcher considered it as a modified records life cycle. According to Chachage (2005), the attributes of the modified records life cycle theory are the prenatal phase of the continuum model, the current phase of the life cycle model, the semi-current phase of life cycle

theory and the inactive phase of the life cycle model. Although the records life cycle concept has influenced the development of records and archives management in many parts of the world, it has been criticized (Kemoni 2008; Shepherd, 2010). For instance, Atherton (1985) as cited in Williams, (2006) asserted that although the records life cycle concept had been useful in promoting a sense of order in the overall management of records, strict adherence to its principles undermined any trend towards greater cooperation and coordination among archivists and records managers and hence ignored the many ways in which the records management and archives operations are interrelated. Williams (2006) argued that a clear division between records and archives can lead to disjointed practice between the records managers who have traditionally been responsible for managing the current and semi-current records and archivists who have taken the responsibility at the archival phase. Further, advances in technology suggested that the management of records in the traditional environment is no longer suitable for records in electronic formats, which have their own distinct characteristics. As technology changes, the records are prone to transformation and conversion (Yusof and Chell 2002). Issues such as technological obsolescence, the need to migrate data to new platforms, and safeguarding of the authenticity of records, all have to be dealt with at the outset (Williams, 2006)

### **1.6 Scope and Limitations of the Study**

The study was conducted in Ghana and limited to the capital Accra where all government ministries have their respective headquarters. Most ministries have regional and district offices across all the sixteen (16) regions but this study was limited to only the head offices of the selected ministries under study. The study focused on records management practices among professional and sub-professional records staff in the various government ministries in Ghana. The study was however limited to some selected ministries due to the large number of ministries in Ghana and other resource constraints. Currently, there are thirty-eight (38) ministries in

Ghana. Of these ministries, the study selected fourteen (14) ministries which have been in existence since the inception of Ghana's Governance. These ministries are as follows: Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration (MOFARI), Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Interior, Ministry of Works and Housing, Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Youth and Sport, Attorney General and Ministry of Justice, Ministry of Roads and High Ways, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development and Ministry of Railways.

### **1.7 Significance of the Study**

The findings of the study would not only be beneficial to the selected institutions but to all public sector institutions in Ghana. The study would provide knowledge of the benefits of records management in the public sector. The study would further provide insights into new methods and technologies of records management that can help in the achievement of the institutions' overall objectives. The study will aid the government and managements to make policy decisions in the area of records management.

The study would also help solve most of the basic problems associated with non-adherence to proper records management by educating records staff on the full benefits of proper record management. The findings from this study would also, serve as a useful body of knowledge on records management and related fields for purposes of student and institutional references, general policy and further research into records management practices by public institutions.

## **1.8 Setting/Research Environment**

Records Management is vital in many organizations in Ghana which includes the ministries. There are currently thirty-eight (38) ministries in Ghana. For the purpose of this study, fourteen (14) ministries were considered. They were;

Ministry of Foreign Affairs whose mandate is to protect and promote the interest of Ghana and its citizens abroad, as well as, advise government on the formulation of policies on international development.

Ministry of Health, whose mandate is to assess and monitor the country's health status, advise central government on health policies and legislation.

Ministry of Justice and Attorney General's Department whose mandate is to formulate policies, monitor and evaluate efficient operations of the legal system.

Ministry of Interior ensures the maintenance of internal security and peaceful development within the law in Ghana as well as ensuring protection of life and property

Ministry of Works and Housing ensures the co-ordination of policies for the development of the country's infrastructure requirement in terms of works, housing, water supply and sanitation.

Ministry of Tourism ensures the promotion of Ghana as a competitive and quality destination to increase tourist arrivals and monitor community involvement in tourism.

Ministry of Local Government seeks to promote the establishment of well-resourced system for the people of Ghana to ensure good governance and balanced rural development.

Ministry of Energy ensures reliable supply of high quality energy services to all sectors of the economy in an environmentally friendly atmosphere.

Ministry of Education ensures access to education at all levels and improves socio economic development through improving infrastructural facilities.

Ministry of Youth and Sports ensures the development of sports and youth empowerment.

Ministry of Transport ensures the co-ordination and evaluation of road safety activities, programmes and strategies.

Ministry of Railways ensures accessible, affordable and reliable railway systems to meet user needs.

Ministry of Finance ensures economic stability for promotion of sustainable economic growth and development of Ghana.

Ministry of Roads and Highways is responsible for road construction and road maintenance in Ghana.

These ministries all operate under the Office of the Head of Civil Service of Ghana.

### **1.10 Organization of Work**

This study is organised into six chapters:

Chapter one: This covered the introduction: background of the study, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, objectives of the study, theoretical perspective, scope of the study, significance of the study, settings or research environment, ethical consideration and description of chapters.

Chapter two: This chapter focused on the review of relevant literature relating to the study.

Chapter three: This chapter discussed the research Methodology which includes research design, selection of subjects (population, sample size, sampling techniques), as well as instrumentation.

Chapter four: This dealt with data analysis and presentation of data that was gathered from the field.

Chapter five: This covered the discussion of research findings.

Chapter six: This chapter dealt with summary of findings, conclusions and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

A literature review is based on the assumption that knowledge accumulates and that people learn from and build on what others have done (Neuman, 2011). According to Boote & Beile (2005), a literature review is an act of reviewing research pertinent to the area of a study. A good theoretical literature needs to produce a conceptual framework, including philosophical stances and theoretical assumptions; key assumptions and theoretical problems or contradictions (Mugenda & Mugenda, 2003). There is a tendency amongst organizations not to base their records management practices on existing theories or principles of records management (Ngulube, 2003). Generally, a literature review should describe, evaluate and clarify and summarise related literature of what other authors have brought to bear and it shares with readers, the results of other research studies that have been reported. The study captured a wider perspective (world point of view), also an African point of view as well as the Ghanaian point of view.

The review discusses the following sub themes:

- 2.2 Concept of records management
- 2.3 The policies and strategies used in the management of public records in the ministries.
- 2.4 The current means and processes that are employed to make public records accessible.
- 2.5 Find out methods used to preserve records in the ministries.
- 2.6 The role of records legislation in the management of public records in the public sector

- 2.7 Skills of those in charge of managing records in the ministries.
- 2.8 Barriers associated with management of records in the ministries.

## **2.2 Concept of Records Management**

Records are valuable assets of organizations. In order to define records management, the concept of “record” needs to be fully explored. A record is defined either in terms of the physical tangible format in which it appears or in terms of the information it contains. It must be noted that records differ in format or size, and have different contents. The term record comes from the Latin word “recordari”, which means to recall or to remember or bring back to mind, and this is exactly what records do (Pember and Cowan, 2010). Cox (2001) also explained records as an extension of human memory, purposefully created to record information, document transactions, communicate thoughts, substantiate claims, advance explanations, offer justifications and provide lasting evidence events.

Records can be defined as "documented information, in any form, created or received and maintained by an organization or person in the transaction of business or conduct of affairs and kept as evidence of such activity" (Adu, 2014). Langemo (1995) defines a record as the memory of the organization, the raw material for decision making and the basis for legal defensibility (UEW Records Management Policy Framework, 2000). In a nutshell, the concept “record” can be defined as information captured for re-use at a later stage as evidence of an activity or action undertaken, and a basis on which future decisions are made. Records are important and it is difficult to imagine life without them, particularly in the running of an organization (Penn et al., 1994).

The effective management of public records allows for fast, accurate and reliable access to information. It ensures the timely destruction of redundant records and the protection of valuable records. In this regard, good records management is essential for any public institution to function effectively. It can thus be argued that poorly managed records entail that government cannot have ready access to authoritative sources of administrative, financial and legal information to support sound decision making or the delivery of programmes and services. Furthermore, if records are not well organized during the earlier stages of their life cycle, those of enduring value will not be readily identified and safeguarded as part of the national archival heritage. To have an effective records management program, there must be legislation in place. (International Standards Organisation (ISO), 2001)

### **2.2.1 Functions of Records**

Records serve the primary function of keeping track of information, and its reproduction for use at a later stage. In trying to pinpoint the rationale behind the act of record-keeping, Dearstyne (2005) opined that records are created for various reasons and can possess either a short term or a long time (archival) value. It can be to serve an administrative function, fiscal function, and legal function or to serve as a source of information. The author further stressed that records that have a long-term value should be adequately preserved because they create room for easy understanding of the past. Records which embody enduring (long term) value should be meticulously handled and stored away because they serve as mediums through which past events and phenomena could be reinvented to form part of the present reality.

According to Popoola (2000) recorded information helps the civil service in planning, decision making and controlling. For effective planning, decision making and controlling to take place, there must be timely access to records. Records, especially in the public sector, are as essential

as other public resources such as assets and finances; public records therefore, should be accorded the same measure of importance or value placed on other public resources. In addition, public records, unlike other public resources, are not easily replaceable when misplaced or damaged, this distinctive nature of public records makes it a delicate item, and as such should be handled with all carefulness. In essence, records are veritable tools in the effective administration of an organization. From the meaning provided by scholars on what a record is, it can be deduced that a breakdown in the transfer of information between component units in an organization consequently will result in a breakdown in the administrative and executive operations thus hindering effective service delivery. The administrative functions of governments and public office holders would also be brought to halt as a result of a breakdown in the process of record creation, transfer, storage, retrieval and reproduction as all government officials depend on records from their own files for the day to day performance of their work.

### **2.2.2 Content, context, and structure of a record**

In order to serve as evidence, a record should be complete and must possess the following three elements -

- ***Content*** – this refers to the information or ideas the record contains;
- ***Context*** – this refers to the information about the circumstances in which the record is created, transmitted, maintained and used (e.g. who created it, when, to whom it was sent, why); and
- ***Structure*** – this means the physical and logical format of the record, and the way parts of the record relate to each other (e.g. the structure of an e-mail record covers its header, body, attachments and corresponding reply (International Records Management Standards, 2011)).

### **2.2.3 Overview of public records management in Ghana.**

As a fundamental activity of public administration, record keeping has immense benefits to public sector management. Public records represent a critical resource in public management. They provide a reliable, legally verifiable source of evidence of decisions and document compliance or non-compliance with rules and procedures (Adu, 2014). The degree to which public management activities are performed depends in part, on the underlying records infrastructure. Where the infrastructure is strong and effective the records management system is underpinned by policy and programs on records disposition. Records disposition refers to the actions that are associated with implementing decisions about the retention or destruction of records. It also includes migration and transfer of records to new storage locations, custodians or owners (AS 4390, 1-, 1996). Besides supporting accountability and defense against litigation, efficient disposition systems promote effective records retrieval, help to avoid inadvertent destruction and eliminate the cost of storing and maintaining unwanted records. From an archive's perspective, record keeping protects the quality and integrity of future archival accessions.

The Public Records and Archives Administration Department (PRAAD) is the central service agency with statutory responsibility for the lifecycle management of public records in Ghana. It ensures the value of public records is systematically evaluated and that their transfer or destruction is authorized (A PRAAD's establishment law, Act 535 of 1997 provides that it ensures the timely and systematic disposition of all public records in collaboration with public agencies, set and consistently apply standards and good practice procedures for the disposition program. The objective of these provisions is to promote a continuum of care for public records in support of good governance, accountability and efficiency (Akotia, 1997).

Until 1997, the remit of the National Archives of Ghana, (as PRAAD was then known) was restricted to the management of the inactive phase of the records life cycle. A purely cultural institution, it had no institutional mandate to provide leadership in the management of earlier phases of the life cycle. Without an interface between the active and inactive phases, the entire public sector was left without a credible watchdog over its evidence base. The National Archives itself was operating without a coherent management system or modern professional procedures. (Akotia, 1997). There was a paradigm shift in 1997 which included the strengthening of the infrastructure for records management. This shift signalled a recognition for an unbroken chain of urgent and professional responsibility for a continuum of care of public records. The reform introduced a unified vision and a National Archives with a greatly strengthened technical and institutional capacity in the form of PRAAD.

#### **2.2.4 Management of public records**

Good records management not only helps protect records but also enhances organizations' operational efficiency. The process of caring for records is known as records management. That area of general administrative management concerned with achieving economy and efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use and disposal of the records of an organization throughout their entire life cycle and in making the information they contain available in support of the business of that organization. (IRMT, 1999).

Adu (2014) postulated that institutions create records to support the activities that they carry out. However, if these records are not managed properly, they will not provide the necessary support and information might be lost causing problems for the institution to provide an efficient and effective administration that ensures that the business runs as smoothly as possible. Records

management is the application of systematic and scientific controls to recorded information required in the operation of an organization's business (Zawiyah and Robert, 1999).

Also, in the works of Pali (2009), records management is defined as the systematic control of all records, either in media format or printed materials from their creation until its final disposition; including the development and application of standards to the creation, use, storage, retrieval, disposal and archival preservation of recorded information. In summary, effective records management will ensure that records are available for use when needed, that privacy and confidentiality are maintained, that redundant records are destroyed and that records ultimately contribute towards sustaining service delivery (International Records Management Standards, 2011).

In the Government, or public sector, "records management" includes the planning, directing, organizing, controlling, reviewing, training and other managerial activities involved with respect to the creation, classification and indexing, distribution, handling, use, tracking, storage, retrieval, protection and disposal of records to achieve adequate and proper documentation of government policies, decisions and transactions as well as efficient and cost-effective operation of government bureaux and departments (International Records Management Standards, 2011).

The care of records and archives is governed by four important concepts introduced here. These are (1) that records must be kept together according to the agency responsible for their creation or accumulation, in the original order established at the time of their creation; (2) that records follow a life cycle; (3) that the care of records should follow a continuum; and (4) that records can be organized according to hierarchical levels in order to reflect the nature of their creation. These principles and concepts are known as the principle of *respect des fonds*, the life-cycle concept and the continuum concept (IRMT, 1990).

### **2.2.5 Records and Information Management**

Atolumah (2011) as cited in Adu, (2014) succinctly posits that records management and information management are two terms often used interchangeably. Some authors have gone at lengths to draw similarities between the two, while others insist that there are differences. For example, records management over the years has increasingly been referred to as records and information management. The merger of these two terms shows how slight a difference exists between them. Information management entails the management of all the information in an organization as well as the management of the people, hardware, software, and systems that produce the information. Records management is portrayed as a means of good information management, improving and enlightening the management of organizations (Yusof and Chell, 1999). Information management is a broader concept within which records management falls. In other words, the main purpose of records management is to manage and control the flow of records with the necessary information within a particular organization. Further, Penn et al., (1994) advanced that records management as the management of any information captured in reproducible form that is required for conducting business. Mazikana (1990) emphasizes that records management is concerned with the generation, receipt, processing, storage, distribution, use and disposal of records. It encompasses a wide variety of activities and sub-disciplines such as the management of mail, correspondence, reports, copies, forms and directives

### **2.2.6 Records management in developing countries**

In many countries of the world, particularly in developing countries, public sector recordkeeping systems are not just weak but have actually collapsed to the point where they do not function at all (IRMT 1999). This collapse has been particularly evident in countries that had once been part of European-dominated colonial regimes. Keoni (2007) pointed out that public sector

records management programs in Africa were plagued by various problems, due to the inability of registries and national archival institutions to play their roles effectively. Over the last several decades there has been a deterioration in the management of official records in developing countries, with consequences for efficiency, effectiveness, accountability, the protection of human rights, provision of services to citizens, poverty reduction strategies and the rule of law (IRMT, 2005).

Various studies have been conducted on the state of recordkeeping in the African public sector providing a considerable amount of theoretical information on the subject under study (Akotia 1996; 2002; Akussah 1996; 2002; Kargbo 2009; Kemoni 2007; Nengomasha 2009; Ngoepe 2008; Ngulube 2000; 2003b; Tough 2003). An investigation into the management of public sector records in The Gambia, and the implication for good governance was conducted by Akotia (1996). The study revealed that public sector financial administration was governed by legislation enactments, namely the financial provisions of the Constitution and the Finance and Audit Act. No systematic recordkeeping existed. Storage conditions were ill-suited for records storage and no procedures existed to govern the management of accounting records. The study revealed a major defect in financial administration arising from the failure to integrate accounting and registry systems, and resulting in essential information being lost or becoming subject to inaccuracies.

A study on records management and preservation in government ministries and departments in Ghana was conducted by Akussah (2002). The study established the care and handling of records in government ministries and departments and implications for preservation, through a survey of 69 government registries. The study brought out the fact that public records at the semi-current stage are the most vulnerable to degradation as a result of the little attention they receive. The study revealed that though there is a registry procedure manual that should serve as a guide

for government ministries and departments, most of the respondents were not aware of it and those who were aware lacked the authority to address the situation. The study revealed that the degradation of records begins in registries in which most records spend their active life. The majority of records that end up in the archives are at various stages of deterioration before reaching their destinations.

The study further revealed that most of the registries were not aware of disaster preparedness. Akussah (2002) recommended that there was a need to preserve records at an early stage, and the government ministries and departments should adhere to registry procedure manuals. Further, the National Archives of Ghana needed to implement the provisions of the Public Records and Archives Administration Act of 1997 with regard to the management of public records. In addition, policymakers needed to make provision for adequate registry funding.

### **2.3 The policies and strategies in the management of records in the ministries**

The objective in managing public records is to make these records serve the purpose for which they were created as cheaply and effectively as possible and, once they have served that purpose, to dispose of them properly. To achieve this, it is necessary to pay attention to the handling of the records from the time that they are created until the time that they are disposed of or transferred to a records center or archives (Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2010). Interpretation of the data on activities and strategies used in the management of public records is discussed under the following sub-headings:

- mission statement;
- registry procedures manual registry budget;
- records management audit exercise;
- records creation and use;

- mail management;
- forms management;
- records storage;
- disaster management and security control;
- records inventory and appraisal; and
- records retention scheduling and disposition.

Ndenje-Sichalwe (2010) postulated that, mission statement, registry procedures manual registry budget are the compelling factors to be consider in as much as other factors are also needed.

### **2.3. 1 Mission statement**

A mission statement explains why the organization exists, that is its overall purpose. Having a mission statement brings the values and expectations of the organization to the forefront, making strategic decisions easier and keeping the goals of the organization in mind (Mannon, 2004)

Every organization needs a purpose that states what it is and a vision that describes what it wants to be. This purpose and vision come together in the mission statement. A mission statement then becomes the starting point for the development of business goals and goals are the basis for setting measurable project objectives and corresponding metrics (Marshall, 2007). A mission statement is a declaration of purpose that explains the role of an organization. The mission statement is the organization's reason for being, a proclamation of why it exists, a clarification of who it serves, and an expression of what it hopes to achieve in the future. A carefully crafted mission statement accurately describes the business and inspires the people who contribute to its success (Marshall 2007). According to Mannon (2004), a mission statement should be short and succinct - no more than a paragraph long. It is a general statement from which all the administrative documents created by an organization must grow. It should accurately explain why the organization exists and what it hopes to achieve in the future.

According to Lusthans (1999), an organization performs because it must carry through activities to achieve its mission statement. Meeting the objectives of the corporate mission involves primarily skilled human resources. The findings of this study pointed out that PRAAD is afflicted by severe skills and knowledge deficit in its human resource base affecting effectiveness and efficiency. Obtaining approval to hire or replace personnel is far from easy, yet the public expects of PRAAD to deliver on its mission. PRAAD, whose remit is nation-wide, has a staff strength of 60 of whom 29 are professionals, 24 sub-professionals and 7 technical staff.

According to Ngulube and Tafor (2006), mission statements educate the public about the objectives and values of the records and serve as the basis for internal planning and budgeting. Without a mission statement, it is extremely hard to effectively execute an organization's core programs. The failure to clearly state and communicate the organization's mission could have harmful consequences, including organization members can waste time "barking up the wrong tree;" the organization may not think broadly enough about different possibilities if its mission statement is unclear or overly narrow; and the organization may not realize when it is time to go out of business (Adu, 2014). Thus, having a mission statement would bring the values and expectations of the organization to the forefront, making strategic decisions easier and keeping the goals of the organization in mind.

Ndenje-Sichalwe (2010) investigated the significance of records management to fostering accountability in the public service reform program of Tanzania. The findings of the study indicated that records in some government ministries in Tanzania were not properly managed to foster accountability in the implementation of the PSRP. The study established that although the introduction of the PSRP has resulted in some efforts at reforming records management practices

in the government ministries, current records management in the government ministries was still weak, thus fostering accountability in the PSRP would be difficult. The findings of the study revealed a lack of registry mission statements. This finding also supports the works of Abuki (2014) who undertook a study on the role of records management in public service delivery in county governments in Kenya and found that few ministries were guided with a mission statement and the majority of them lack one.

### **2.3.2 Registry procedures and budget**

A registry procedures manual provides offices with procedures based on best practices for the management of records. The manual should be designed to inform all personnel of the services that the records management program provides and instructs staff on proper methods used throughout the records management program (Robek, Brown and Stephens 1995). It provides guidelines for registry offices in defining their internal records management procedures and thereby serves as a framework for establishing consistent and reliable record keeping systems. The manual describes the importance of managing records from their creation to eventual disposal and the management responsibilities for registries. The manual outlined that registries are concerned with files in the earlier operational phases of their lives during which the files are used for the purposes for which they were created. It is important however that registries know not only how and when to pass files on to the subsequent stages of their life cycle but that they understand the significance of those stages.

Moloi (2009) investigated E-records readiness in the public sector in Botswana and the findings revealed the existence of registry procedures manual and desk instructions for registry staff and record users. Similar findings were found in the works of Lyaruu, (2005) Ndenje-sichalwe, (2010) Ngulube and Tafor, (2006). Ndenje-Sichalwe (2010) indicated that, in order to ensure that there was a robust information service that formed the basis of an accountable

administration, the Government of Tanzania initiated the records management project in 1997. One of the tangible successes of the project was the production of a registry procedures manual.

In terms of registry budget, Ngulube and Tafor (2006) postulated that funding is key to formulating and implementing effective and efficient records and archival services. The existence of progressive and comprehensive legislation is not likely to bring about any positive changes in the management of public records unless resources to implement the laws are made available to archival institutions.

Mazikana (2009) observed that records and archives management in East and Southern Africa have not been able to attract the substantive funding required to make the difference partly because the link has not been established between recordkeeping and national development issues such as poverty reduction, infrastructure development and environmental protection.

In the works of Kemoni (2007), it was revealed that the absence of specific budgets allocated to registries suggested that records management activities in the government ministries were given a low priority. Without the appropriate funding to undertake various records management activities, there would likely not be any appropriate changes to the current records management practices in the public sector. Some of the records management activities with financial implications included enacting records management policies and preparing manuals, training registry personnel, developing and implementing a disaster management program, environmental control and monitoring and appraisal and disposition programs. The findings corroborate with the works of Lyaruu (2005; Ngulube and Tafor (2006)

Further, Mnjama (2006) pointed out that inadequate funding has also been a contributing factor in the accumulation of vast quantities of records in the region. Without adequate funding, it has

been impossible for many archival institutions, the majority of which are located in capital cities, to visit outlying stations to inspect, appraise and advise on effective recordkeeping requirements.

### **2.3 Accessibility to Records**

There is nothing more basic to the relationship between government and the governed than the right of access to information (Solove, 2002). The right to access government information is not only a pre-condition for good governance or participatory democracy and economic development, but it is a fundamental human right, and the basis for all other human rights (Banisar, 2006). Principles of good governance namely accountability, transparency and rule of law all depend to a large extent on the free flow of information (Mutula and Wamukoya 2009). Openness and transparency in the decision-making process can assist in developing citizen trust in government actions and maintaining a civil and democratic society (Banisar, 2004). Citizens can take part in the government and speak for their rights only if the government provides access to information.

A basic source of information is government records and a basic right is an access to these records (Ozdemirci 2008). Access to information means access to records, access to the documented decisions of government and the evidence that supports and sustains public sector work (Millar 2003). Adu (2014) asserted that traditionally, archivists and records managers have been passive custodians of information, limiting their role to the selection, storage, preservation and controlling of access to records. However, the situation has changed and calls have been made for a re-examination of laws governing access to information. Governments around the world are increasingly making available more information about their activities International organizations have also realized the importance of the right to information in the modernization of governments and have strived to achieve this (Ozdemirci, 2008).

In view of this, it is imperative that information in the custody of government is not only available but also should be accessible to the public. The availability and accessibility of relevant and timely information empower citizens' and civil society groups, enabling them to effectively participate in the governance process as well as hold government accountable (Akotia, 1997).

Access to public document statutes is evident when there is access to government information or public documents, or freedom of information (Akotia, 1997). They all grant to the citizen in one form or another statutory right of access to documents held by government bodies (Riley, 2000). One of the pillars of accountability and transparency in a democratic state is the extent to which people have access to information to assist them in evaluating whether the government is transparent or not. Ndenje-Sichalwe and Ngulube (2009) investigate records management and access to information: key to fostering accountability, good governance, and protection of human rights. The study revealed that under these circumstances, the public is denied their right of access to information contained in records that are less than 30 years old. The absence of explicit records management policies has also affected the records management practices and access to information. The lack of public access to government-held information suggests that individuals may fail to better understand the role of government and the decisions being made on the implementation of the reforms. According to Mnjama (2005), if the nations of ESARBICA region are to become more democratic and accountable to their citizens, there is a dire need for them to formulate laws and policies that guarantee nationals the right of access to vast quantities of government-held information. There is, therefore, a need to review archival legislation in the region and specifically those areas of archival legislation which restricts access to information.

Also, Solove (2002) explored the Access and Aggregation in Privacy, Public Records, and the Constitution. The study found that the extent of access to information on the public records was considerably low. The author elucidated that Public records contribute to this privacy problem

because they are often a principal source of information for the private sector in the construction of their databases. Marketers stock their databases with public record information and the uses to which these databases are put are manifold and potentially limitless. The personal information in public records is often supplied involuntarily and typically for a purpose linked to the reason why particular records are kept.

## **2.5 Preservation of Records**

According to Harris (2000), “the term ‘preservation’ in archives and libraries was used synonymously with ‘conservation’ and books plus paper repairs were left to the craftsmen and artisans, namely bookbinders, artists, and printers”. This traditional definition of preservation has limited many preservation activities, which are supposed to be applied at the early stages of the records life cycle to archives and library material.

Millar and Roper (1999) state that preservation may be viewed as a totality of processes and operations involved in the protection of records and archives against damage or deterioration. It involves maintenance, examination, conservation and restoration of records. Harvey’s (1993) definition of preservation agrees with Millar and Roper’s (1999) approach on preservation, that preservation ought to look at the totality of events. Preservation activities should include planning and implementation of policies, procedures, and processes that together prevent further deterioration of records.

The reason for preserving records is to protect them from injurious factors such as excess heat or lighting, fire breakouts and humidity and prolong their life span. According to Odeyemi, Issa and Saka, (2011), the reason for preserving records is to protect them from injurious factors such as excess heat or lighting, fire breakouts and humidity and prolong their life span. Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) emphasized that disaster management plan is one of the fundamental

methods of preserving records. Disaster management plan is a formal written plan, on the basis of identified potential accidents together with their consequences, describes how such accidents and their consequences should be handled either on-site or off-site. Disaster management is also known as disaster preparedness and is regarded as an essential part of any records management programme.

Disaster management ensures that organizations are prepared to respond quickly to emergencies. Disaster mitigation, or the ability to identify risks and prevent some emergencies from happening, should always play a key role in an institution's emergency preparedness and planning efforts. For instance, Akor and Udensi (2014) carried out a study on the assessment of the records management system in the establishment division of two universities in Nigeria. The study found out that there is no policy on records management practices and no disaster preparedness in case of any disaster

Another way of preservation is to keep vital records from general records. Vital records refer to a record facility where items like legal documents of an organization, title deeds, major contracts, property plans, minutes of certain meetings, insurance policies among others are stored away safely for future use (Alegbeleye & Chilaka, 2019). Vital records by nature are often irreplaceable and should be treated with utmost carefulness, and as such adequate measures are put in place in order to safeguard these categories of document from every form of destruction or damage be it fire, burglary, insect attack among others, as these documents can make or mar the continual existence of such an organization, hence they should never be destroyed. In asserting the degree of significance a vital record is to an organization, Massey University Records Management policy (2013) opined that, vital records embody those records whose absence can bring the continual existence and operation of an organization to a halt, as

they contain information which is essential in re-establishing the organization in the event of a disaster which destroys all other records in the organization.

Further, another evaluation method of preserving documents is the establishment of preservation policy. In order for records and archival institutions to effectively implement a preservation program, there should be a set of guidelines and policies that govern the entire program's implementation strategy. The National Archives of the United Kingdom (NAUK) (2009) states that the purpose of formulating a preservation policy is to state the principles that guide the care and preservation of the National Archives' collection. The policy covers the preservation needs of all the materials in their custody, including digital records and surrogates. In the NAUK, the preservation policy provides a comprehensive framework for decision-making in the institution and the development of procedures (NAUK, 2009).

Ramokate (2006) supports the works of NAUK (2009) in which it was found that many record centers have established conservation units in compliance with the overall institutional policy. However, there is a further important requirement to have a specific guiding instrument (preservation policy) that will facilitate decision making for daily preservation operations. Ngulube (2003) states that the importance of policies can never be over-emphasized when it comes to outlining the responsibility for the preservation of archival materials of all types. He adds that policies clearly define and inform staff and users of the scope and goals of the preservation program. Policies further delineate the path to be followed towards achieving those goals. This implies that a preservation policy is the pivotal point on which a successful preservation programme hinge. Similar findings were found in the work of Odeyemi, Issa and Saka, (2011); Alegbeleye & Chilaka (2019).

## **2.6 Legislation for the management of records.**

Mittal (1971 as cited in Hamooya, Mulauzi and Njobvu, 2011) points out that legislation in general terms means ‘laying down of the instructions to the persons responsible for running a government in order to properly discharge each function of government’. It provides for the powers, obligations, and limits of such institution Legislation relating to public records or national archives exists in some form in most countries.

The basis of all records management authority is comprehensive and up-to-date legislation. Records legislation must ensure complete protection for all government and para-statal records and give the archival administration wide powers for securing and protecting records. The following points are particularly important when reviewing existing legislation or drafting a new law. In drafting new legislation, it is necessary also to review and revise any existing legislation affecting the care of records and information. While these points apply most directly to national governments, the ideas will be equally relevant to lower levels of government (and potentially also to the private sector) (IRMT, 2005). A comprehensive records law should provide for

- the establishment of a records and archives institution with jurisdiction over records generated in the government service and responsibility for those records throughout their life cycle
- the establishment, within the records and archives institution, of the archival agency as a public institution, responsible not only for records generated in the government service but also for any other para-statal or private records of national or regional importance
- a public right of access to the holdings of the archival institution, including policies on the regular opening of government records under clear conditions and a workable procedure for appraisal and declassification

- protection for the rights of individuals and organizations that may have provided information held in records, under terms of confidentiality
- provision for public scrutiny of the program of the records and archives institution and its success in achieving its targets (IRMT, 2005)

Governments all over the world require comprehensive archival legislation to ensure that records and archives are managed accordingly for effective running of the current operations of the organisation, as well as for posterity (Hamooya, Mulauzi and Njobvu, 2011).

National archival institutions as the centralizing agencies for official records are mandated to facilitate the proper management of public records so that the information contained in them remains accessible (Ngulube and Tafor 2006). Wato (2003) emphasized that National Archives are responsible for providing guidance and assistance to government agencies on the creation, maintenance, use, and disposition of government records. National Archival institutions worldwide are involved in the management of public sector records. In the United Kingdom, the National Archives advises government departments and the wider public sector on best practices in records management. In Australia, the National Archives provides advice to government agencies by developing policies, standards, guidelines and providing training and advice about modern recordkeeping (Stuckey, 2004). In the United States of America, the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) helps to preserve the nation's history by overseeing the management of all federal records and provides public access to information (Akotia, 1997). Further, the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARSA) helps to foster national identity and protect human rights by promoting efficient, accountable and transparent government through the proper management and care of government records (Kemoni and Ngulube 2007).

Further, in many countries, national archival institutions are mandated by records and archives legislation that stipulates the proper management of records in the public sector (Kemoni and Ngulube 2007). In the same vein, Akotia, (1997) emphasized that legislation as a role in records management ensure a consistent and coherent approach to the creation, maintenance, protection and disposal of records, and the transfer of those of enduring value to the archives for permanent preservation according to established standards and practices. In support of Kemoni and Ngulube (2007) and Akotia (1997), Millar (2003) emphasized that comprehensive and up-to-date records and archives legislation is a critical prerequisite of effective records care and consequently, of accountable records management. Records and archives legislation establish the infrastructure within which appropriate records and archives systems can be created and implemented. It must ensure complete protection for all public sector records, in whatever format, and provide the governing organization, be it National Archives or other bodies with comprehensive authority for securing and protecting records (Smith, 2007).

Again, an investigation into the management of public sector financial records in the Gambia, and the implication for good governance was conducted by Akotia (1996). The study revealed that public sector financial administration was governed by legislation enactments, namely the financial provisions of the Constitution and the Finance and Audit Act. And this performed phenomenal roles in ensuring effective and efficient records keeping.

Also, in the works of Hamooya, Mulauzi, and Njobvu (2011) it was revealed that the current archival legislation in Zambia does not reflect the changing aspects of archives and records management. A number of archival and records management issues such as electronic records

and freedom of information have gained prominence over the years. It is, therefore, important to review archival legislation in Zambia to bring it acceptable international standards.

## **2.7 Skills of Record Staff**

Knowledge and skills in any life endeavour is critical for its success. In the same vein, keeping records that requires some level of technical skills will require proper training. Education and training are concerned with the development of knowledge, skills and attributes necessary for individuals to live meaningfully and to contribute positively to society. In fact, education and training are key to developing life-long skills and expertise (Yusof and Chell 1998 as cited in Ndenje-Sichalwe, 2010). Education provides new professionals with knowledge of the theory of the discipline and helps them to explore current practice. Education encourages reflection and should provide foundation knowledge, together with a problem-solving approach and reflective learning habits that are transferable to the wide range of situations the student will inevitably encounter in the course of professional life (Anderson, 2007).

A professional education programme will introduce the learners to the theory and principles underpinning professional practice in the discipline. Anderson (2007) pointed out that in our fast-changing world, nothing remains the same for even three or four years anymore, much has had to be learned along the way; new skills, new approaches to knowledge, new ways of working with new tools, undertaking courses or learning with new technologies. A sound education at the point of entry to the profession, competency-based training for continuing professional development and involvement in research-based inquiry and knowledge creation all have essential roles in developing and sustaining well-rounded records professionals, to the greater benefit of the profession as a whole (Anderson 2007). The archives and records management profession, in common with other professional workgroups, requires a complex knowledge base

of theory and intellectual technique to underpin its special expertise (Shepherd 2006). According to Manyambula (2009), one of the factors which contributed to the poor records management in Tanzania was the lack of training in records management. Most of the registries were staffed by officers who had received little or no records management training. Office attendants, messengers and gardeners had been promoted and worked as registry personnel in some cases.

Ngulube (2001) emphasized that training of records managers should be governed by guidelines that identify the standards upon which education and training institutions develop curricula for their learning programs. Mazikana (2009) pointed out that very few archival and records management schools prepare records managers for the front end of records management. Mazikana (2009) stated that most curricula focuses on the management of semi-current records or on the point at which records are being off-loaded from the records creating institutions to the records centers of the archival institution.

According to Abuki (2010), in order to ensure the management of records is up to professional standards. Especially the public sector for a long-time records management has never been regarded to need professionals trained and skilled in records and archives management. Professional knowledge means a person has gone to college and university or enrolled in programmes that offer records and archives management at certificate and above levels. The person must have experience in the field so as to ensure records management as a unit in the county headquarters is handled professionally. Skills in records management entail the ability to perform records management functions such as records organization, appraisal, survey, filing, retention, disposition among others. Besides those functional skills, it is also important that a records manager has budgetary skills, knowledge in drafting reports, training manuals, policies among others. "A records management personnel should be able to communicate effectively, motivate other members of staff, possess IT knowledge since organizations are adopting and even generating electronic records among other skills and knowledge." (Adu, 2014).

Pember (1998) undertook a survey on the rise of the new age records management professional. The study focused on the survey of record keeping in local government agencies in Western Australia conducted by the author indicated that 49% of record keeping staff were employed at the very lowest level in the organization, 80% did not have a qualification of any kind, and 61% had less than three years' experience in any aspect of record keeping. Of those with qualifications 10% had a para-professional certificate or diploma and 10% had a university degree, usually in a field other than record keeping, generally librarianship. It can be inferred from the statistics that, at least the employee possessed some adequate level of knowledge and skills to handle records.

On the contrary studies by Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000), Iwhiwhu (2005), and Egwunyenga (2009) confirmed that African records keepers lack the basic skills and competences for handling records and archives in the public sector. There is a serious problem of technophobia in most offices in Africa, especially among the older employees. Due to inadequate skills in information technology, many traditional librarians, records managers, and archivists are very conservative and have phobia for computers. This may be due to generation gaps between the new and old professionals which led analog information managers to perceive computers as a threat to their status as experts. Ezeani (2010) in her studies observed that younger librarians are faster in capturing the use of ICTs than the older librarians because "older librarians are finding it difficult to cope with the requirements of the digital age". Also, Ojedokun (2008) noted that older librarians are "too reluctant to jettison the old practices for a new one". Successful application of information handling technologies in the management of electronic records in developing countries requires an ability to overcome staff and personal resistance.

Brendan (2012) opined that the growing use of information technologies in record management creates a lot of problems in the management of records in both public and private organizations.

He added that in Africa and many developing countries governments are looking forward to computerizing their core functions and compelled most African countries to use ICTs in their public services by adopting e-government. Regrettably, these projects fail to succeed because governments neither assess the available information framework suitable for electronic records management nor consult the records managers to determine how the process of automation will not affect the role of records managers in providing reliable and authentic evidence.

## **2.8 Barriers associated with records in the ministries**

Records and information are the lifeblood of any organization and therefore they ought to be well managed for any organization whether public or private to achieve its objectives. However, they are saddled with some challenges.

Abuki (2014) undertook a study on the role of records management in public service delivery in county governments in Kenya. The study found that there was poor records management which hindered public service delivery in ways that led to fraud and lack of detecting it, it led to wastage of resources, it hindered the protection of rights of the county and those of the public or citizens they served, poor records management also led to creation and keeping of unwarranted records, the public lost the protection and preservation of their institutional memory among other issues. Similar findings were found in the works of (Kemoni & Ngulube, 2008; Ndenje-sichalwe, 2010; Kemoni, 2007).

Ezeani (2010) also identifies some challenges that hinder the progress of records management as following; inadequate funding, lack of enough trained personnel, lack of equipment, supplies and facilities in registries, lack of clear records management policy, standards, guidelines and procedures to guide the management of both paper and electronic records, lack of automated records management program, low priority given to records management program and functions

and also some respondents cited low salaries for registry staff this findings corroborate with the works of Ojedokun (2008) and Akotia (1996).

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

This section comprises the research design, selection of the subjects, population of the study, sample size, sampling technique, data collection instrument, data collection procedure, analysis and presentation of data, ethical considerations.

#### **3.2 Research Design**

A research design refers to the overall strategy chosen to integrate the different components of a study in a coherent and logical way, thereby, ensuring that the researcher will effectively address the research problem; it constitutes the blueprint for the collection, measurement, and analysis of data (Kumar, 2011). The researcher adopted the survey method for the study. A survey provides a quantitative or numeric description of trends, attitudes, or opinions of a population by studying a sample of the population. Hence, from the results of the sample, the researcher can then either make a claim or generalise about the population (Creswell, 2013). A survey research is an approach that collects data through sampling from the population and uses statistical analysis to make inferences about the population (Curtis & Curtis, 2011).

#### **3.3 Selection of Cases**

The research focused on the ministries in Ghana, specifically their headquarters in Accra, as the study area for the research. Respondents were selected from fourteen ministries for the purpose of the study.

### 3.4 Study Population

According to Frankel and Wellen (2000) a population is a larger group to which a researcher hopes to apply the result of a research. According to Darko-Adjei (2018), quoting Creswell, 2013) a population refers to the entire group of people, events or organisations or things that the researcher wishes to investigate. Simply put, a population is the total number of subjects that a sample will be drawn from. The population of this study was made up of records staff and some key administrative staff. They included 65 Sub-professionals and 55 professionals. The total population for the study was 120 as shown in Table 1.1

**Table 3.1: Population Table**

	Number of Records Staff		Total
	Professionals	Sub-Professionals	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration(MOFARI)	5	15	20
Ministry of Transport	3	2	5
Ministry of Energy	3	4	7
Ministry of the Interior	3	3	6
Ministry of Works and Housing	4	4	8
Ministry of Finance	4	2	6
Ministry of Health	4	2	6
Ministry of Tourism	3	3	6
Ministry of Youth and Sport	3	5	8

Attorney General and Ministry of Justice	8	6	14
Ministry of Roads and Highways	2	4	6
Ministry of Education	4	6	10
Ministry of Railways	3	3	6
Ministry of Local Government And Rural Development	5	7	12
<b>Total</b>	54	66	120

*Source: Field survey 2020*

### **3.4 Sample Size**

A sample size refers to the number of the part of a population that is selected for a research study. According to Frankel & Wallen (2000), a sample size is a subset of a population and it also helps to describe the precision of research. However, this study used the entire population; therefore, there was no sampling or sampling technique employed.

### **3.5 Instrumentation**

According to Hsu and Sandford (2018, p.1), “instrumentation refers to the tools or means by which investigators attempt to measure variables or items of interest in the data-collection process.”

#### **3.5.1 Data Collection Instrument**

A research instrument is a written list of questions, to which answers are recorded by respondents (Kumar, 2011). The research instrument used for the study was a questionnaire which is a device

for securing answers to questions by using a form which the respondents fill in themselves (Chandra, 2017). The reasons for the choice of a questionnaire for this study were its characteristics such as:

1. Compared to the time required to conduct personal interviews, questionnaires save the researcher's time as each participant enters his/her responses on themselves.
2. It is very economical as compared to interviews in terms of time spent
3. Respondents have the feeling that they will remain anonymous and this will enable them to give out an objective view as the purpose of a study demands.
4. Large amount of data on a broad range of topics may be collected within a fraction of the time needed for interviews.

Again, the questionnaire is a widely used and useful instrument for collecting survey information providing structures, often numerical data, being able to be administered without the presence of the researcher and often being comparatively straight forward to analyse.

Despite the above strengths of questionnaires, it is saddled with some challenges such as not providing an opportunity to collect additional information through observation, probing, prompting and at times the inability to clarify questions while they are being completed. In spite of these weaknesses, the questionnaire was considered the most suitable for the nature and purpose of this research. Part of the questionnaire for this study was structured and the other part was unstructured. "Yes" or "No" questions.

Some questions in the questionnaire were closed-ended Likert-scale questions which have been found to be suitable for the measurement of attitudes and perceptions. This is because it enables respondents to indicate the degree of their belief in a given statement” (Best & Khan as cited in Agbofa, 2012).

### **3.5.2 Source of data**

The study used both primary and secondary data in this study. Primary data was collected through questionnaire administered to records staff at the various ministries whilst articles from the internet, journals, etc. were accessed as secondary data.

### **3.5.3 Data Collection Procedure.**

The researcher requested for an introductory letter from the Department of Information to be sent to the director of the various institution in charge of records. When permission was granted, the researcher scheduled an appropriate time with the subjects for the questionnaire to be distributed. The researcher left copies of the questionnaire to subjects who were not able to complete the questionnaire on the collected later.

### **3.6 Analysis of Data and Presentation of Findings**

Data analysis is one of the critical stages of research. According to Burns and Grove (as cited in Acheampong, 2016, p. 42) “data analysis is the process of extracting from a given data, the relevant information from which a summarised and comprehensible numerical description can be formulated”. Data gathered for this study were analysed using descriptive and inferential statistics. The former is concerned with the description, presentation and summarisation of a set of data in order to properly describe the various features of that set of data. In effect, descriptive statistics describe numerical data” (Acheampong, 2016, p.41). According to Curtis and Curtis (2011), inferential statistics allows a researcher to make an inference or deduction about the population from analysis of the sample. Inferential statistics helped the researcher to analyse the data and draw conclusion.

### **3.7 Ethical Considerations**

According to Fraenkel & Wallen (2000) “ethical issues in research are defined as behaviour that conforms to standards of conducting a research” Prior to data collection, the researcher sought formal permission from the Chief Directors of the various ministries with introductory letters from the Department of Information Studies; university of Ghana. The researcher contacted participants personally and communicated the intention of the study. After participants agreed to participate in the survey, the researcher arranged a date to distribute questionnaires to the subjects. Before distributing questionnaires, the researcher explained the content of the questionnaire to the understanding of participants. Participants were assured that information provided would only be used for academic purposes and their identities kept confidential. Participants were asked to complete an informed consent form to formally declare their willingness to participate in the study.

As a matter of principle, ethical considerations were kept in mind at every stage of the study. Again, as academic work demands, all materials that were used in the study were dully acknowledged to prevent plagiarism. The researcher adhered to the research ethics and code of conduct of the University of Ghana as research demand.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

#### 4.1 Introduction

The study investigated the management of public sector records in Ghana with focus on some selected ministries. The data analysis and findings of the study presented in this chapter reflects the methodological approach of a purely quantitative methodology. Descriptive Statistics were used to analyse the data based on the objectives of the study. The focus of the study was however, on the records offices of the ministries.

##### 4.1.1 Response rate

According to Ankrah (2014), a response rate (completion rate or return rate) in survey research “refers to the number of people who answered the survey divided by the number of people in the sample”. A response rate of at least 50% is adequate for analysis and reporting, that of 60% is good while 70% or any percentage above is excellent (Babbie as cited in Anaman, 2017).

A total number of 120 copies of questionnaires were given out and 100 were successfully retrieved which gives a response rate of 83%.

This chapter begins with the response rate, socio-demographic characteristics, and professional background of respondents who participated in the study. The remaining sections are organized under the major themes as outlined in the objectives of the study:

- i. Socio-demographic characteristics and professional background.
- ii. The policies and strategies used in the management of public sector records in the ministries.
- iii. The current means and processes employed to make public sector records accessible

- iv. Methods used to preserve records in the ministries.
- v. The skills of those in charge of managing records in the ministries
- vii Barriers associated with records and information management in the ministries.

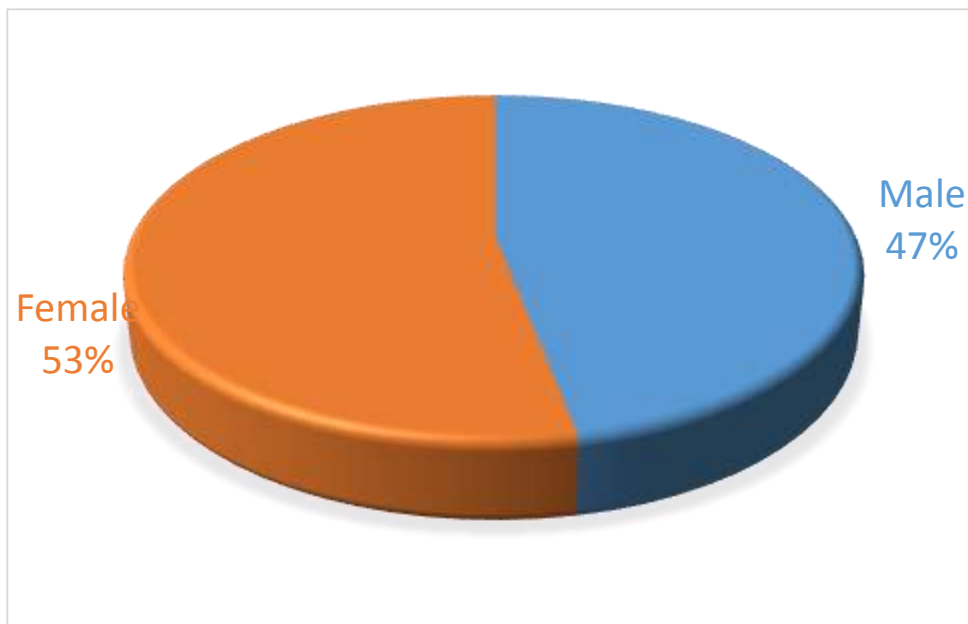
## 4.2 Socio-demographic characteristics and professional background.

Socio-demographics are the statistical data of a population that shows the age, gender, and other biographical details of respondents. The demographic characteristics of respondents included in the survey were age, gender, and level of education. These variables provided a contextual background to the study.

### 4.2.1 Gender Distribution of Respondents

According to Encarta Dictionary, “gender is the sex of a person or organism, or a whole category of people or organisms”. Gender distribution of respondents are shown in Figure 4.1

**Figure 4.1: Gender of Respondents**



Source: Field data, 2020

As can be seen in Figure 4.1, out of the total respondents, 53 (53%) were female while 47 (47%) were male.

#### 4.2.2 Age Distribution of Respondents

Age was one of the demographic variables in this study. Table 4.1 shows the age distribution of respondents.

**Table 4.1: Age Distribution of Respondents**

Items		Frequency	%
Age ranges	20-29	28	28.0
	30-39	60	60.0
	40-49	11	11.0
	50 and above	1	1.0
	Total	100	100.0

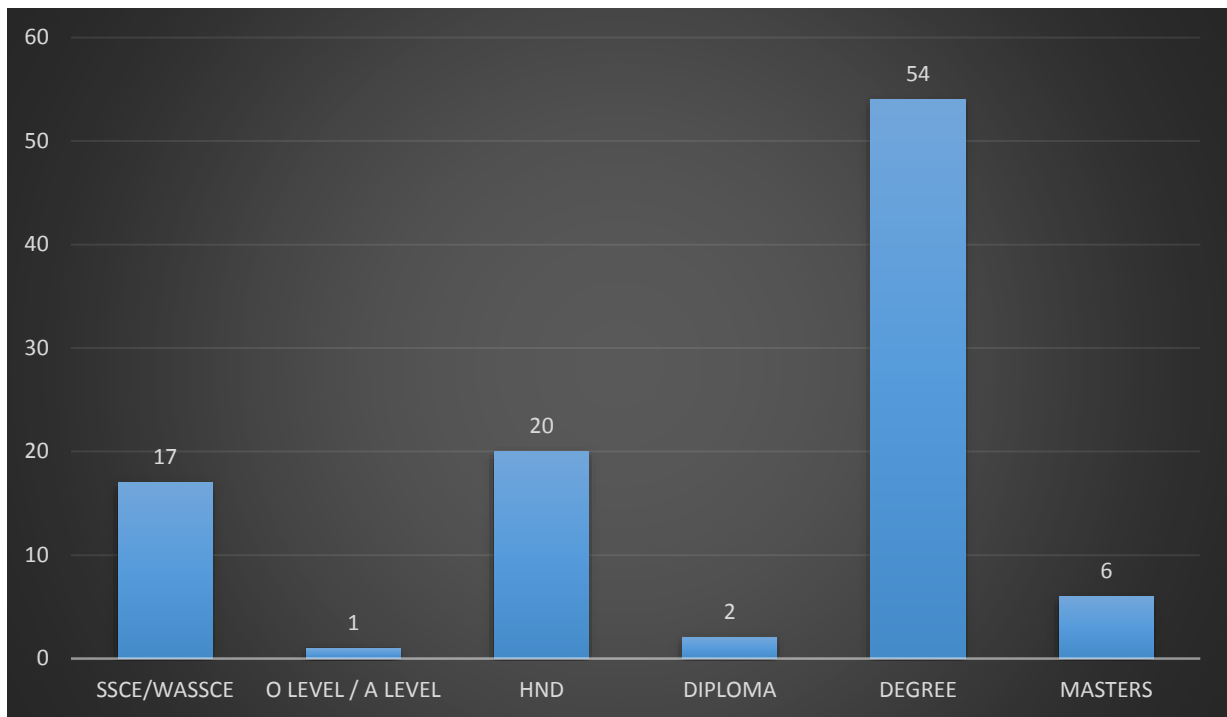
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As seen in Table 4.1, 60 (60%) out of the total respondents of 100 (100%) fell within the age range of 30-39 representing the majority, followed by 20-29 with a total number of 28 (28%). Also, 11 (11.0%) fell within the ages of 40-49 while 1 (1.0%) of the respondents was in the age range 50 and above. These findings show that most of the staff in the various ministries fell within the age range 30-39.

### 4.2.3 Educational Level of Respondents

Educational level refers to the years of formal instruction received and completed, usually based on passing formal examinations. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of education. Their responses are shown in Figure 4.2

**Figure 4.2: Educational Level of Respondents**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

Figure 4.2 brings to bear that, 54 (54%) of the respondents, representing the majority, had first degrees from various universities, followed by 20 (20%) of the respondents who had the Higher National Diploma (HND). Further, it can also be seen from Figure 4.2 that, 17 (17) of the respondents had SSSCE / WASSCE while 6 (6%) representing the least number of respondents

held a masters degree. It can be concluded from these findings that, most of the staff at the ministries had a first degree.

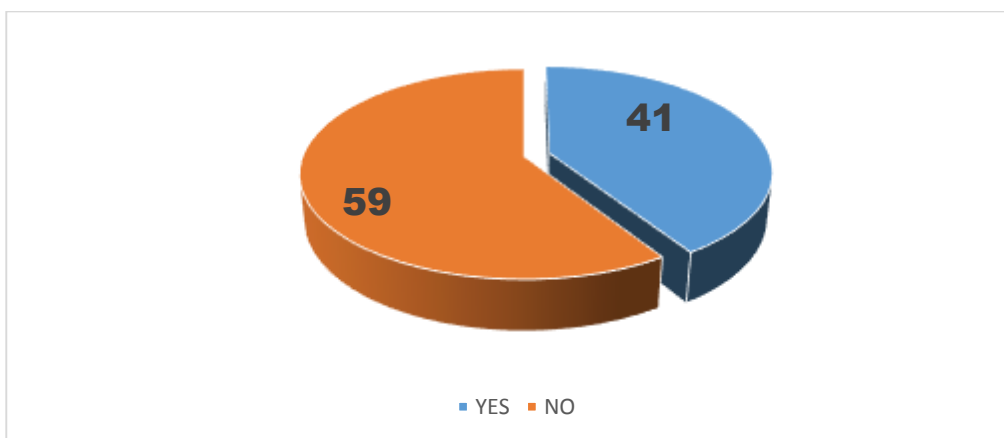
### 4.3 Policies and strategies used in the management of records in the ministries.

This section covers the various policies and strategies deployed by the various ministries in keeping their records. Respondents from these Ministries included; Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Health, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Works and Highways, Ministry of Railways, Ministry of Transport, Ministry of Energy, Ministry of Tourism, Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Youth and Sports, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration and Attorney General and Ministry of Justice.

#### 4.3.1 Records Management Policy

The need for policy in managing records cannot be overemphasized. In light of this, respondents were asked to indicate if their ministry had a records management policy. The responses obtained are shown in Figure 4.3

**Figure 4.3 Records Management Policy**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

Figure 4.3 shows that the majority totalling 59 (59%) of the respondents indicated “No” which means they did not have a records management policy while 41(41%) indicated “Yes” meaning they had. It can, therefore, be concluded from these findings that the majority of the records departments in the ministries did not have a records management policy that regulated their activities.

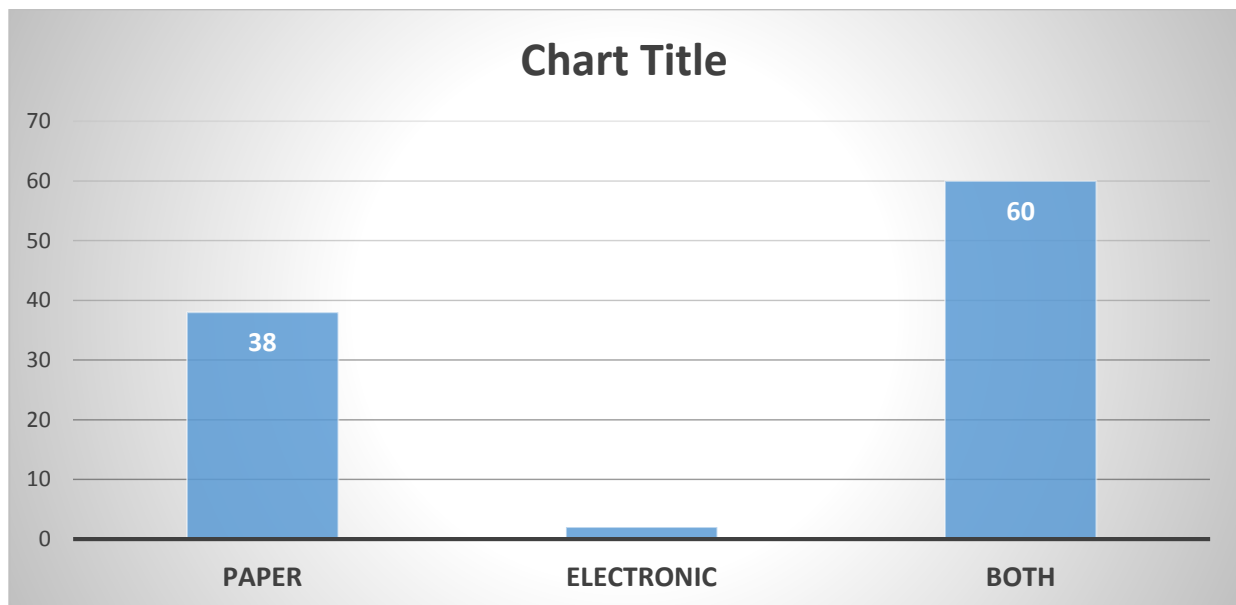
### 4.3.2 Records Management Strategies

Records management strategies are a systematic and planned approach to records management covering records from creation to disposal, efficiency and best value through improvements in the quality and flow of information, and greater coordination of records and storage systems.

#### 4.3.2.1 Format of Records

Respondents were asked to indicate how records were captured in their records offices. Their responses are depicted in Figure 4.4

**Figure 4.4: Format of Records**



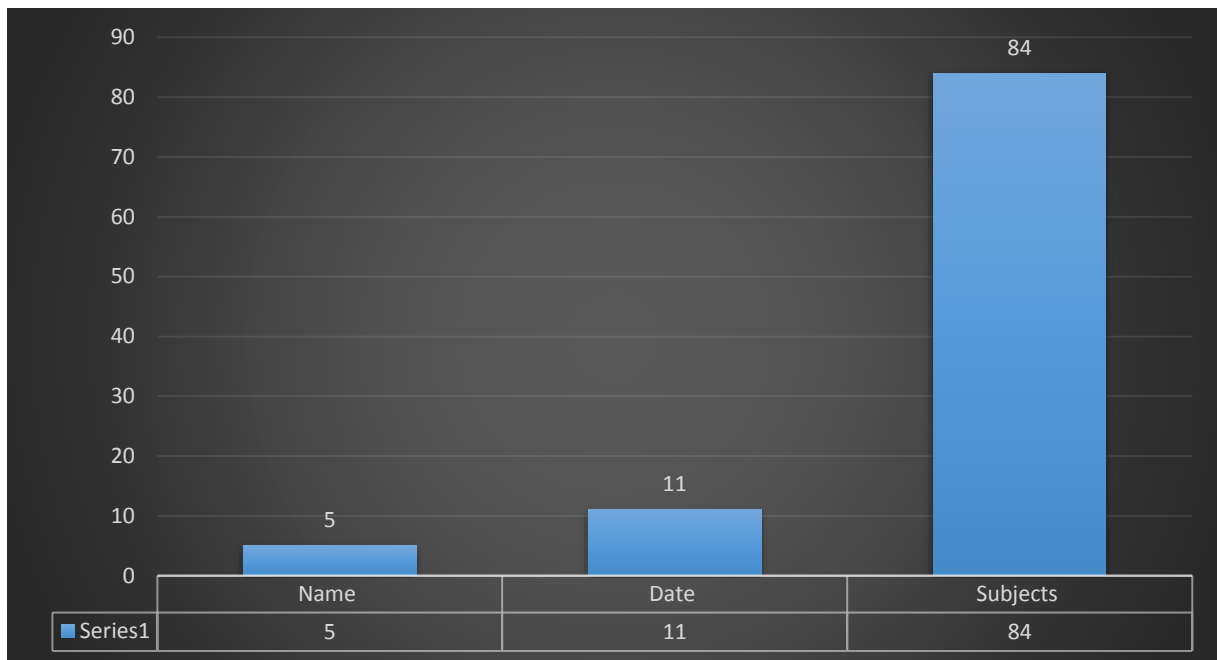
*Source: Field data, 2020*

It can be seen in Figure 4.4 that, 60 (60%) out of the total respondents confirmed records are captured in both electronic and paper format, 2 (2%) of them indicated electronic-only while 38 (38%) indicated paper. It can be inferred based on these findings that, most of the ministries still go by capturing both paper and electronic based documents as far as their perceived benefits and their records management policies are concerned.

#### **4.3.2.2: Classification of Records**

Classification is the “systematic identification and arrangement of business activities and/or records into categories according to logically structured conventions, methods, and procedural rules represented in a classification system”. The importance of classification often tends to be misunderstood or dismissed by end-users and even some professionals. Therefore, records managers should put more effort into developing strategies that address the concerns expressed by users on how records are classified. In view of this, respondents were asked to indicate how records are classified in their records offices. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4.5

**Figure 4.5: Records Classification**



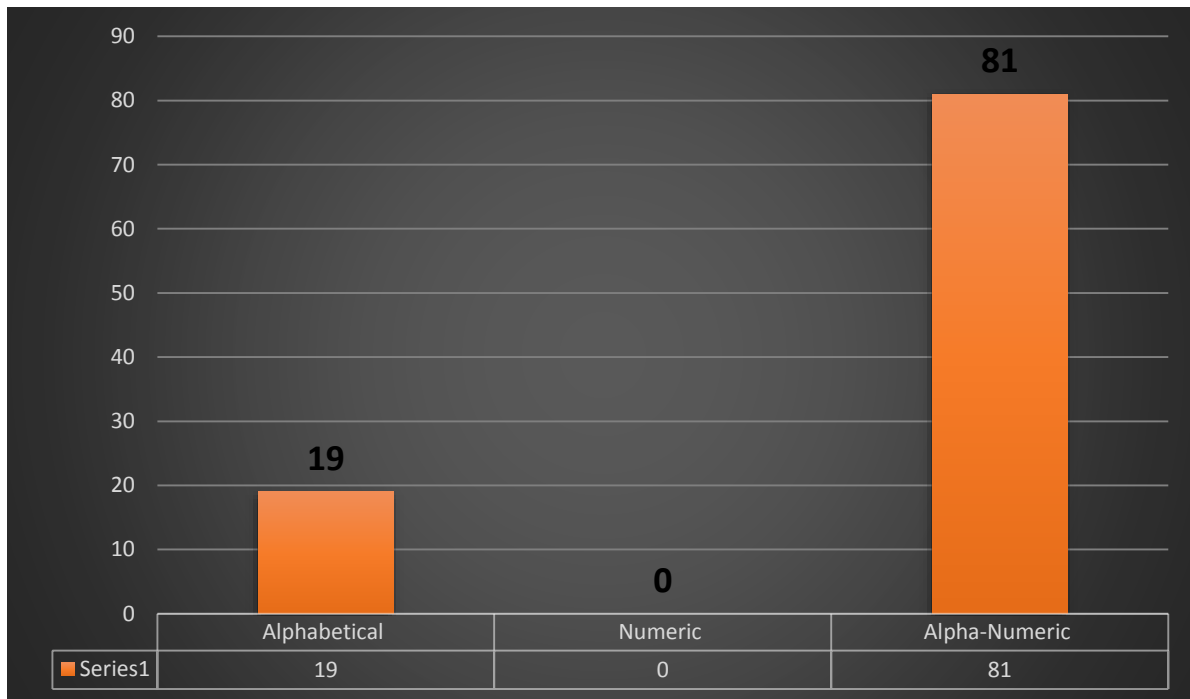
*Source: Field data, 2020*

The generated reports in Figure 4.5 shows that a greater number of the respondents numbering 84 (84%) indicated that records are classified based on subjects, followed by 11 (11%) of the respondents who indicated that they classified records by date while 5(5%) representing the least number of respondents indicated that they classified records based on names. It can, therefore, be concluded that based on the reports generated, the majority of record offices at the various ministries classified records based on subject classification.

### **4.3.2.3: Filing Systems**

In order to find out how filing was done in the ministries, respondents were asked to indicate the type of filing systems being used in their records offices. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4.6

**Figure 4.6: Types of filing systems used in keeping records**



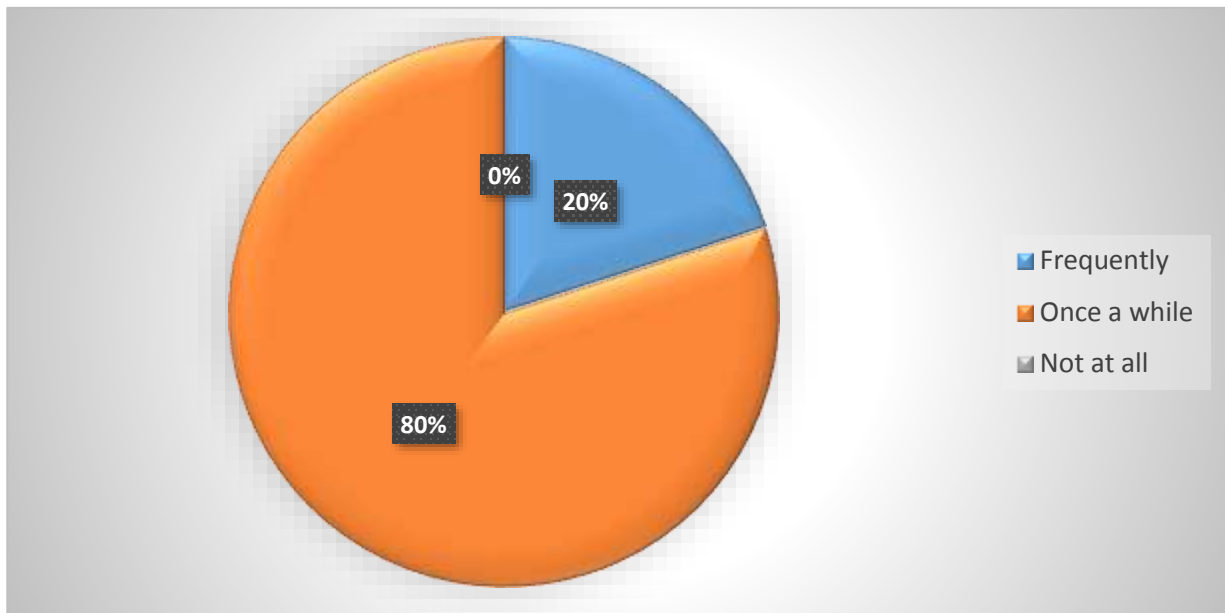
*Source: Field data, 2020*

Responses illustrated in Figure 4.6 shows that a greater number of the respondents numbering 81 (81%), indicated Alpha-Numeric as the filing system used in keeping their records, thus alphabets and numbers, 19 (19%) indicated alphabetical only, while none of the respondents indicated numerical only. This finding is an indication that most of the records offices at the ministries use the alpha-numeric filing system.

#### **4.3.2.4 Closing Files**

Under this subsection, respondents were asked to indicate the frequency at which files were closed to ascertain if files were closed as soon as they became three centimetres thick or five years old. Their responses are shown in Figure 4.7

**Figure 4.7: Frequency of Closure of files**



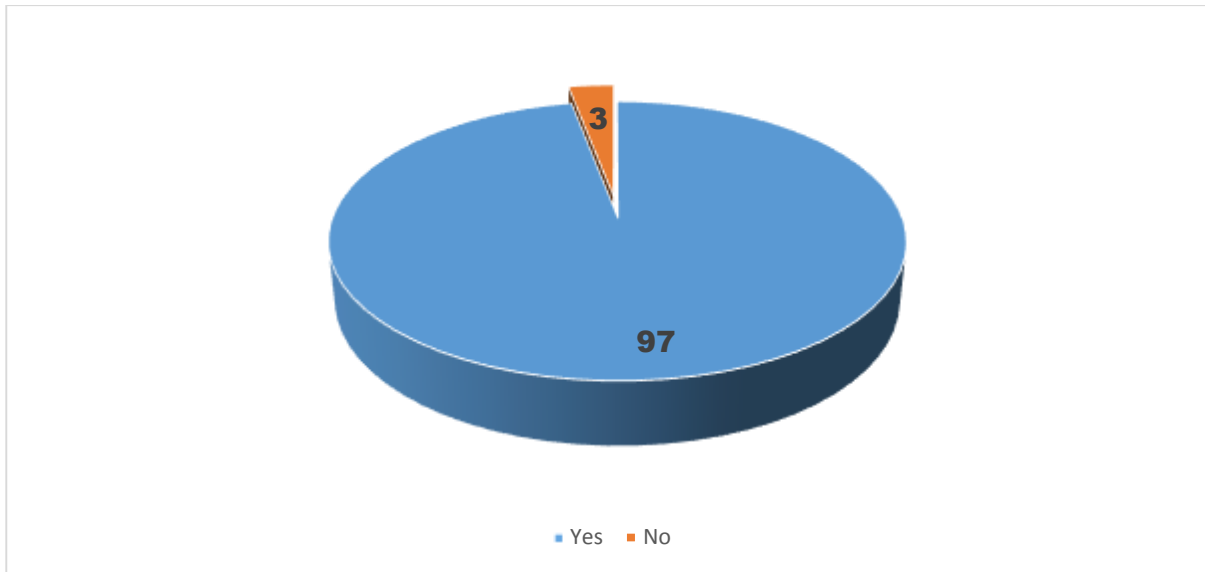
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As it can be seen in Figure 4.7, majority of 80 (80%) respondents indicated that files were closed occasionally while 20 (20%) did observe that files were closed “frequently”. No respondent indicated “Not at all”. It can be inferred from the responses that; files were closed occasionally at the ministries.

#### **4.3.2.5 Filing Correspondence**

Filing refers to the order in which records are placed in a file jacket according to their filing system. Records are in different formats and forms which determine whether they should be filed or not. In order to find out if records were readily available when needed, respondents were asked to indicate whether all records were filed in the registries. The responses are illustrated in figure 4.8

**Figure 4.8: Filing of records in the records office**



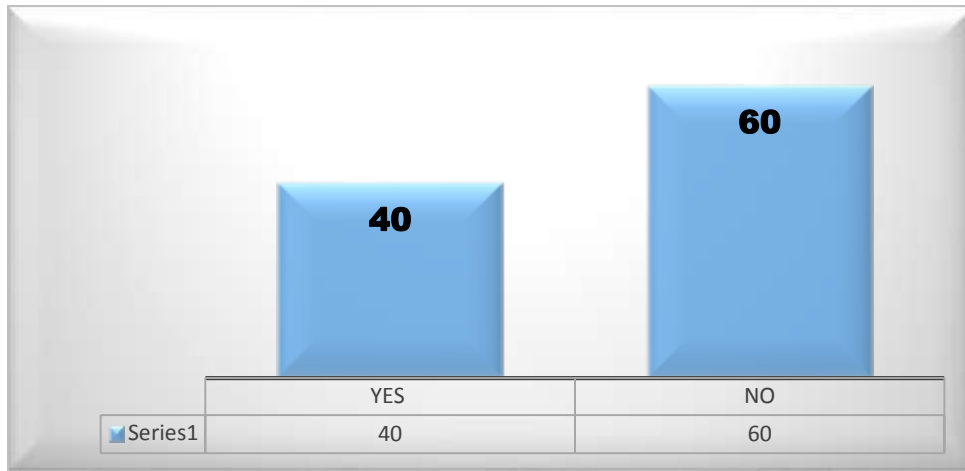
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As can be seen in Figure 4.8, a greater number of the respondents numbering 97 (97%) indicated in the affirmative that all records were filed in the records office, while 3 (3%) indicated otherwise. This was a clear indication that the records were filed in the offices of action officers.

#### **4.4.1 Electronic Records Management System**

Electronic Records Management (ERM) refers to the management of records electronically in different formats. It also ensures organizations have the records they need when they are needed. Firstly, under this sub-theme, respondents were asked to indicate if they used any electronic records management system in their records office or registry. The responses are shown in Figure 4.9

**Figure 4.9: Electronic records management system**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.9, it is observed that 60 (60%) out of the total respondents of 100 (100%) indicated “No” while 40 (40%) indicated “Yes”. It can, therefore, be inferred from the responses that, less records offices in the ministries have electronic records management systems.

#### **4.4.3 Types of Electronic Records Management System**

Respondents were asked to indicate the type of electronic records management system used in the ministries. Respondents’ responses are shown in Table 4.2

**Table 4.2 Types of Electronic records management systems**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>Total percentage</b>
Database Management system	25	25.0	25	25.0
Off-the-Shelf electronic software	15	15.0	15	15.0
Custom made/Bespoke software	0	0.0	0	0.0
Non response	60	60.0	60	60.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

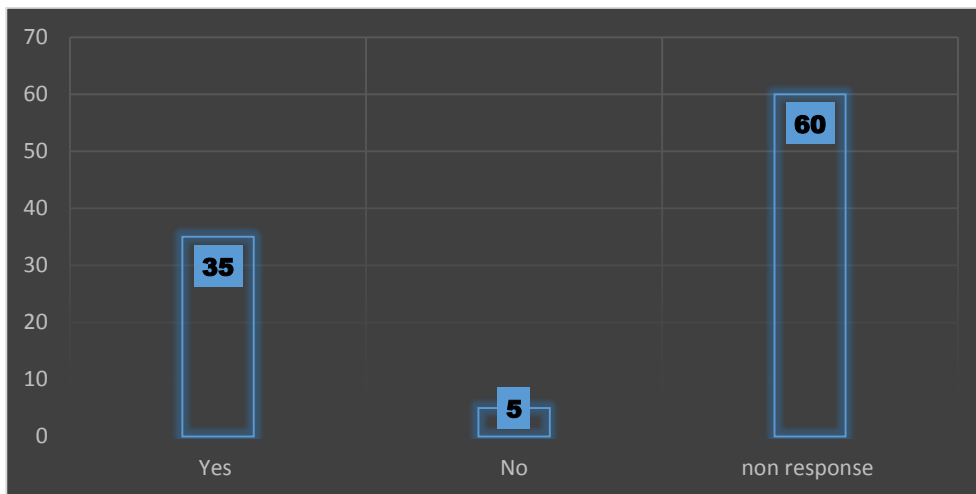
Table 4.2 shows that 25 (25%) out of the total respondents indicated that they used a database management system to keep electronic records, while 15 (15%) selected Off-the-Shelf electronic software. The data also shows that none of the respondents indicated Custom made/Bespoke software and 60 (60%) of the respondents did not select any of the options and this can be explained with reference to the fact that, 40 (40%) of the ministries used electronic records and technically 60 (60%) used the manual system.

#### **4.4.4 Electronic Records Management Policy**

When developing policy for electronic records management, at a minimum, it should cover the creation of records (including prohibitions on what not to have in the system), Retention, security (including back-up storage media) and Retrieval. In an attempt to find out if the ministries had

written policies that guided electronic records management in order to define what information could be kept as records, the procedures and their retention periods, respondents were asked to respond to the question “as to whether there was any electronic records management policy?” Responses obtained are shown in Figure 4.9

**Figure 4.9 Electronic records management policy**



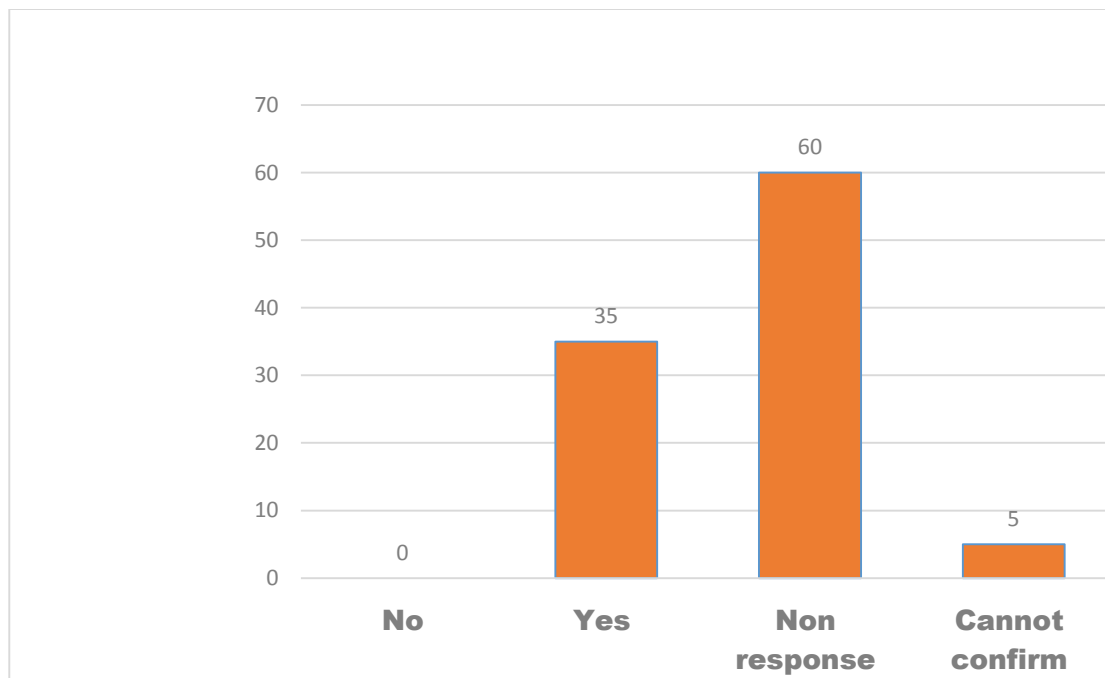
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As demonstrated in Figure 4.9, 35 (35%) of the respondents responded in the affirmative that they had Electronic records management policies that guided them in the day to day activities of keeping electronic records, 5 (5%) indicated “No” while 60 (60%) did not respond to the question. This finding is an indication that a greater number of the records offices in the ministries which used electronic records management did not have any policy to guide them.

#### 4.4.5 Restrictions to Unauthorized Users

As records are vital to every organization, it is always recommended to keep unauthorized users from having direct access to confidential information. The responses as to whether there were restrictions to unauthorised access to electronic database elicited the following responses depicted in Figure 4.10

**Figure 4.10: Restrictions to unauthorized users**



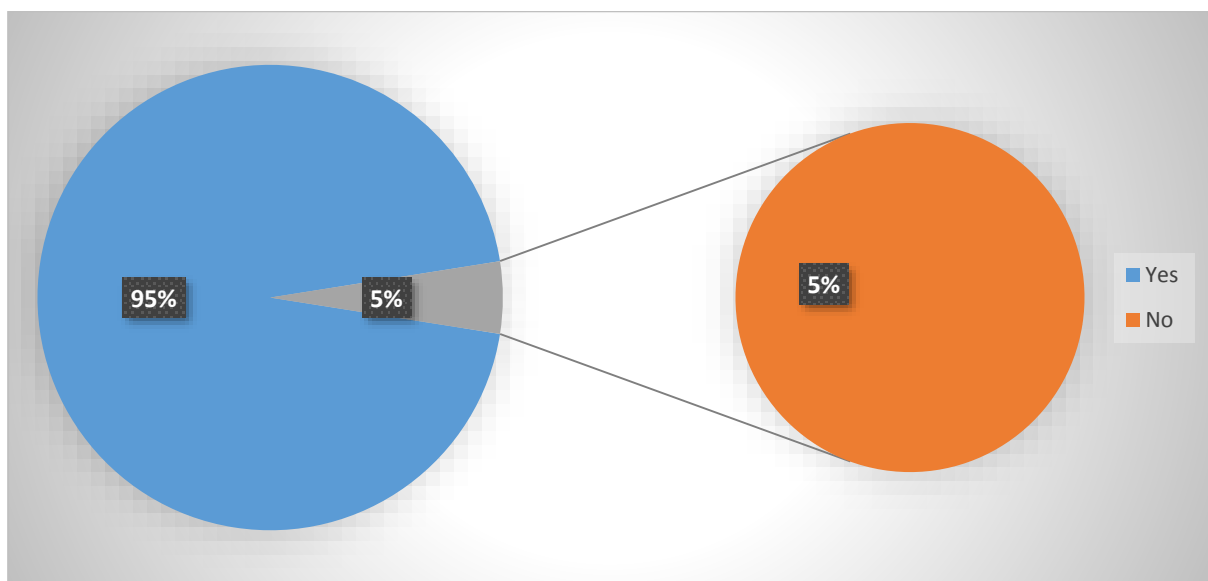
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As seen in Figure 4.10, 35 (35%) out of the total respondents indicated “Yes” which signifies that access to electronic databases were restricted to unauthorized users, none of the respondents indicated “No” while 5 (5%) of the respondents indicated that they could not confirm and 60 (60%) non responses were recorded. These findings show that electronic records management has been a key focus as far as security check is concerned to prevent unauthorized access.

#### 4.4.6 Availability of Computers in the Records Office/Registry

In order to find out if records offices in the ministries used computers to manage records, respondents were asked to indicate if they had computers in the records office. The responses are shown in Figure 4.11.

**Figure 4.11: Computers in the records office/registry**



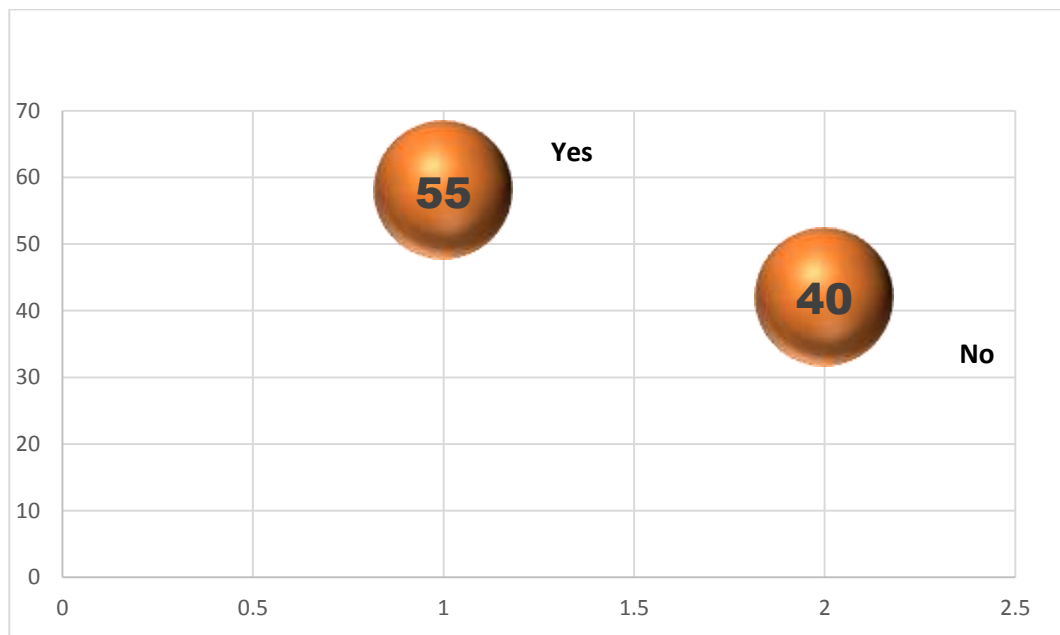
*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.11, 95 (95%) out of the total respondents confirmed that they did have computers in their records office/registry while 5 (5%) indicated No. It can be deduced from these findings that almost all the records offices/registries of the ministries had computers. The findings are not surprising because as the world is embracing the fourth industrial revolution, various records and archives centres are moving towards electronic or digitization of record keeping, in order not to lose their value.

#### 4.4.7 Computer Usage.

The follow-up question requested respondents to indicate if they did use computers in managing records. The responses can be seen in Figure 4.13.

**Figure 4.12: Use of computers in managing records.**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

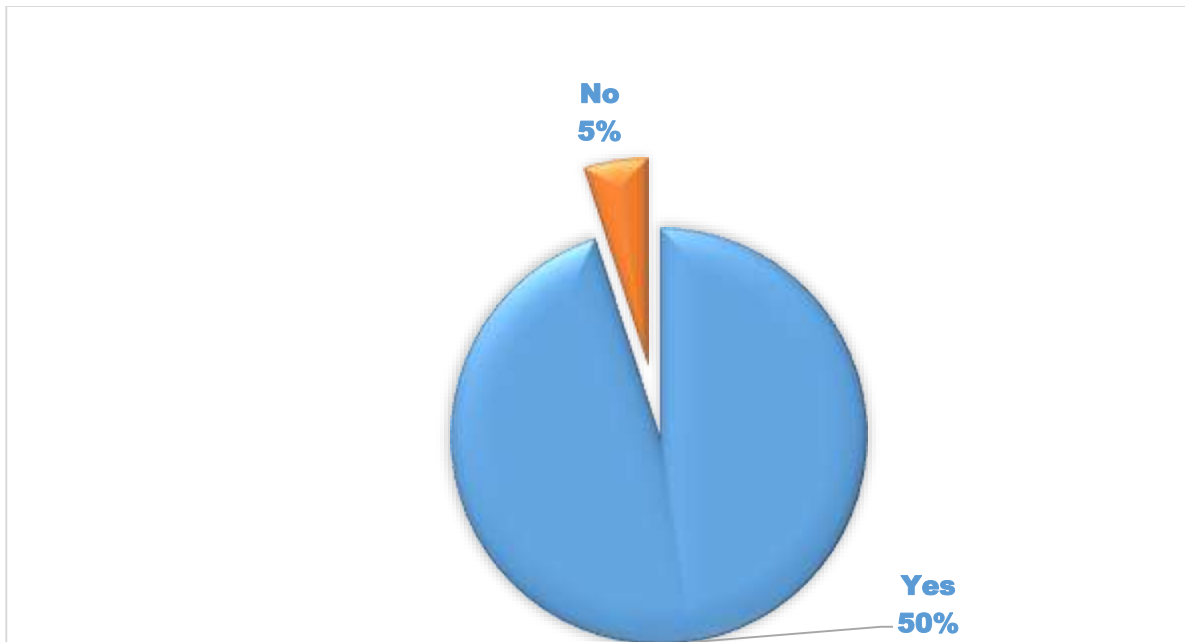
Figure 4.12 shows that 55 (55%) which represents the majority of the respondents indicated “Yes” to the question “as to whether they used the computers to manage their records”, 40 (40%) indicated “No”. It can be deduced from these findings that majority of the registry in the various ministries used computers in managing records.

#### 4.4.8 Backup system

Backup is recommended to ensure organizations have copies of original records which can be lost due to several factors such as disasters, virus attacks, hackers, and others. Respondents were

asked if they had backup systems for the electronic records in their ministries. Responses captured can be found in Figure 4.13

**Figure 4.13: Backup system for electronic records**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

Figure 4.13 shows that 50 (50%) of the respondents indicated that they had backup systems to safeguard their electronic records, while 5(5%) indicated No. It can therefore be deduced from the responses that the ministries have backup systems for their records.

#### **4.4.9 Backup methods used in the records offices**

Backing up of records, especially electronic records, has become a norm for most organizations. The methods used to backup paper records are different from that of electronic records. The researcher sought to find out from respondents the methods used to backup electronic records in the records offices. The responses recorded have been depicted in Table 4.3

**Table 4.3 Backup methods used for electronic records**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>Total percentage</b>
Real time backup	26	26.0	26	26.0
Off time backup	14	14.0	14	14.0
Non response	60	60	60	60.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Table 4.3, it can be seen that 26 (26%) of the respondents specified that they used real-time backup methods in keeping their records, while 14 (14%) indicated that they used off time backup and 60 (60%) non-response was recorded. These findings show that the majority of the registries in the various ministries had deployed the real-time backup method for their electronic records.

#### **4.4.10 Storage Conditions for Electronic Records**

In order to ascertain if electronic records were kept in a good environment, respondents were asked if they did have suitable storage conditions for electronic records. The responses have been depicted in Table 4.4

**Table 4.4: Storage conditions for electronic records**

<b>Items</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
Air-conditioned rooms	33	33.0	33	33
Smoke detectors	22	22.0	22	22
Temperature control	7	7.0	7	7
Non response	38	38.0	38	38
Total	100	100.0	100	100

*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Table 4.4, it is observed that, with regard to keeping electronic records, 33 (33%) of the respondents indicated that there was air-conditioners in place, while 22 (22%) indicated the presence of smoke detectors, 7 (7%) indicated the use of temperature control as a suitable storage condition for their electronic records and 38 (38%) of the respondents were non responsive. It can be deduced from this finding that air-conditioned rooms were suitable storage facilities for the ministries in their effort to keep electronic records.

#### **4.5 Accessibility to records**

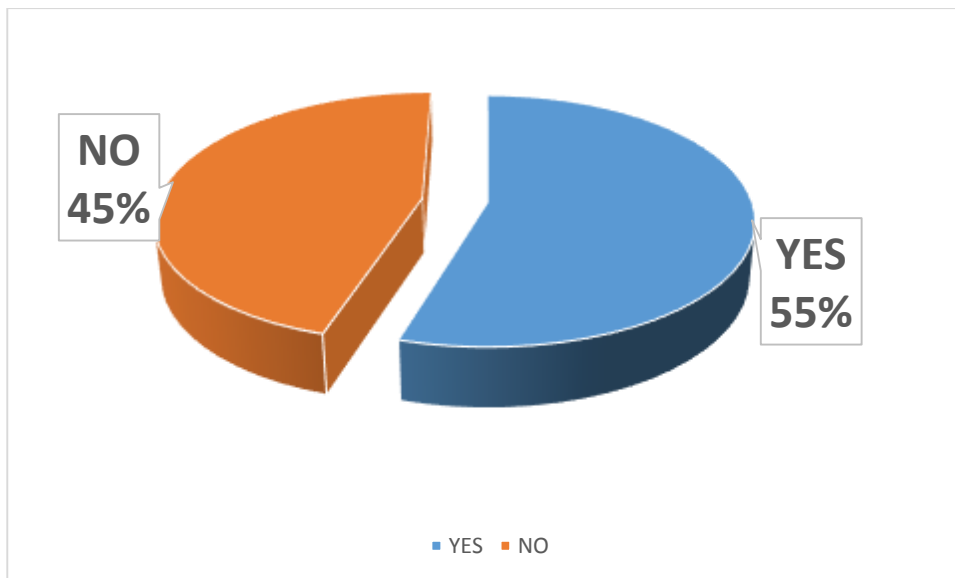
This ensures that only authorised action officers have access to records in an organization and also inform records officers of the procedures for requesting and issuing out of records.

Respondents were asked the follow up questions on accessibility of records in 4.5.1, 4.5.2, 4.5.3, 4.5.4, 4.5.5, and 4.5.6

#### 4.5.1: Records Procedure Manual

Records procedure manuals describes the procedures for managing and maintaining current records. It provides detailed guidance on a range of topics relating to the provision of efficient and effective records office services. In order to find out the procedures for managing and maintaining current records, respondents were asked to indicate if the ministry had a records procedure manual. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4.16

**Figure 4.16: Records procedure manual**



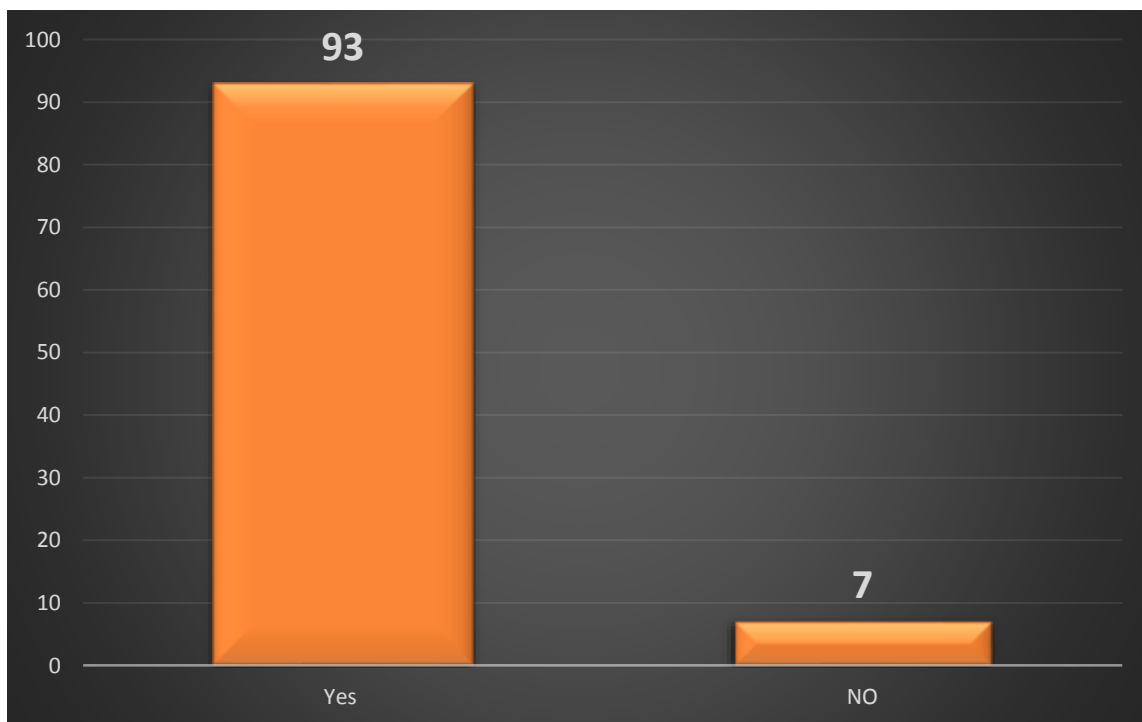
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As shown in Figure 4.16, a greater number of the respondents indicated that they had records procedure manuals in their records offices while 45 (45%) indicated “No”. This finding is an indication that most of the ministries used records procedure manual to guide their day to day activities.

#### 4.5.2: Tracking of Records

Tracking records or files in the records office is a control mechanism for records officers to know where a record is at a particular time. In the quest to inquire into methods used to make records accessible in the ministries, respondents were asked to respond to the question “as to whether they had a tracking system to ensure records issued out are returned to the records office/registry? The responses are illustrated in Figure 4.17.

**Figure 4.17 Tracking ministries Records**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.17, it can be observed that 93 (93%) of the respondents, indicated that they had tracking systems in place to ensure records issued out were returned to the records office/registry, while a very insignificant number of the respondents, that is 7 (7%), indicated they did not have

tracking systems. This finding demonstrates that, the various records offices or registries use a tracking system to safeguard their records.

#### 4.5.3 File movement measures in the records offices/registries.

When files are created in the records office, its existence is recorded to enable the records office manage it, track it and produce it whenever it is required. The researcher sought to find out which of the following file movement measures were in place. That is, file movement book, file transit slips, file census, and tracer cards. Responses are illustrated in Table 4.5

**Table 4.5 File movement control measures in place**

<b>File Movement control Measures</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>%</b>	<b>Total Frequency</b>	<b>Total Percentage</b>
File Movement Book	97	97.0	97	97.0
File Transit Slips	1	1.0	1	1.0
File Census	2	2	2	2.0
Total	100	100.0	100	100.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

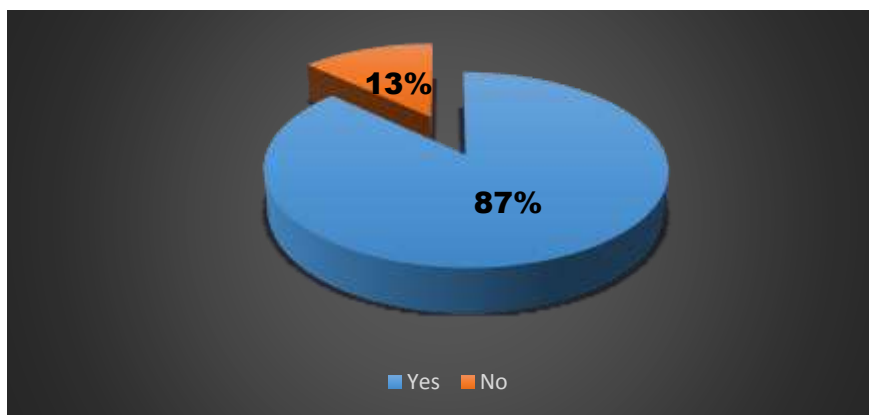
As seen in Table 4.5, 97 (97%) of the respondents indicated file movement books as records movement control measures that were used in the records offices or registries at the ministries, 2 (2.0%) of them indicated file census, while 1 (1%) of the respondents indicated file transit

slips. It is therefore clear that majority of records officers in the ministries use the File movement books to track their records.

#### 4.5.4 Central locations for semi-current Records.

Semi-current records are records that are not frequently used in an institution but are transferred from the offices of the action officers to a central location called a records center. This is usually done to create space for records frequently used in the ministries. In order to ascertain the presence of a central location for records not frequently used, a question was asked to that effect. The responses are illustrated in Figure 4.18.

**Figure 4.18 Central location for semi-current Records.**



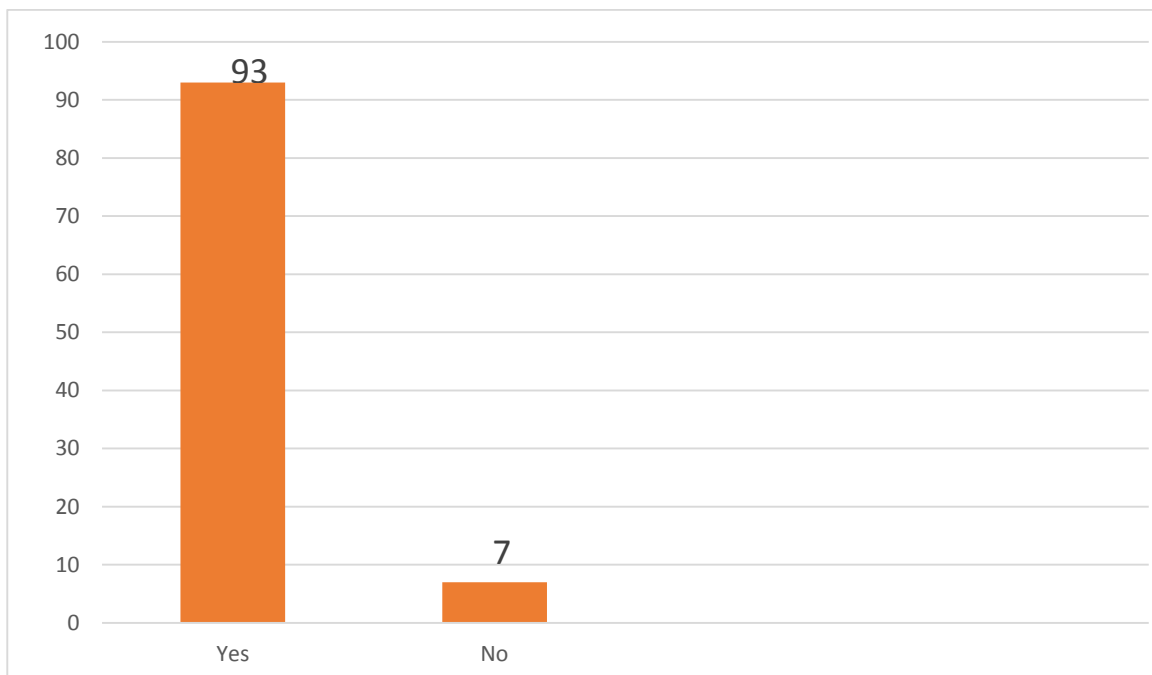
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As can be observed in Figure 4.18, 87 (87%), representing the majority of the respondents confirmed in affirmative that there were records which were not frequently requested but still useful to the ministry, while 13 (13%) indicated otherwise. This finding is an indication that most of the ministries keep records which are not frequently requested but are still useful to the ministry.

#### 4.5.5 Records transfer

In order to ascertain if there were procedures for transferring records to the PRAAD, respondents were asked to indicate if there were procedures for transferring records to PRAAD. Responses are shown in Figure 4.19

**Figure 4.19: Procedures for transferring records to PRAAD**



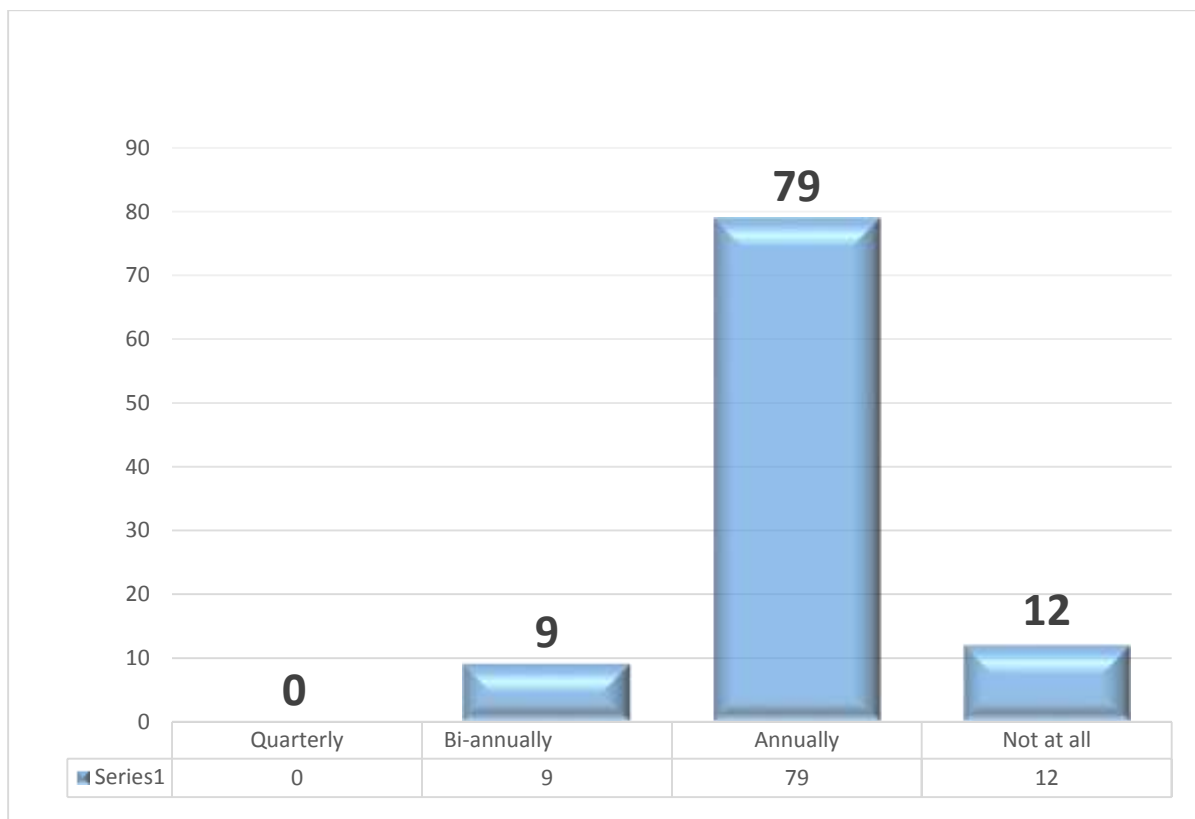
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As indicated in Figure 4.19, out of the total respondents, 89 (89%) representing the majority confirmed that there were procedures for transferring records to PRAAD while 11 (11%) indicated there were no procedures for transferring records to PRAAD. This finding depicts that, the ministry has procedures for transferring records to PRAAD.

#### 4.5.6 Frequency of transfer of records to the archives.

In a follow-up question, the researcher sought to find out how often records were transferred to the archives. The responses are captured in Figure 4.20

**Figure 4.20: Frequency of transfer of records to the archives**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.20, 79 (79%) of the respondents indicated that records were transferred to the archives annually, representing the majority, followed by 12 (12%) of the respondents who indicated “Not at all” whereas 9 (9%) indicated bi-annually while none of the respondents indicated quarterly. The results from these findings show that most of the ministries transfer their records annually to the archives.

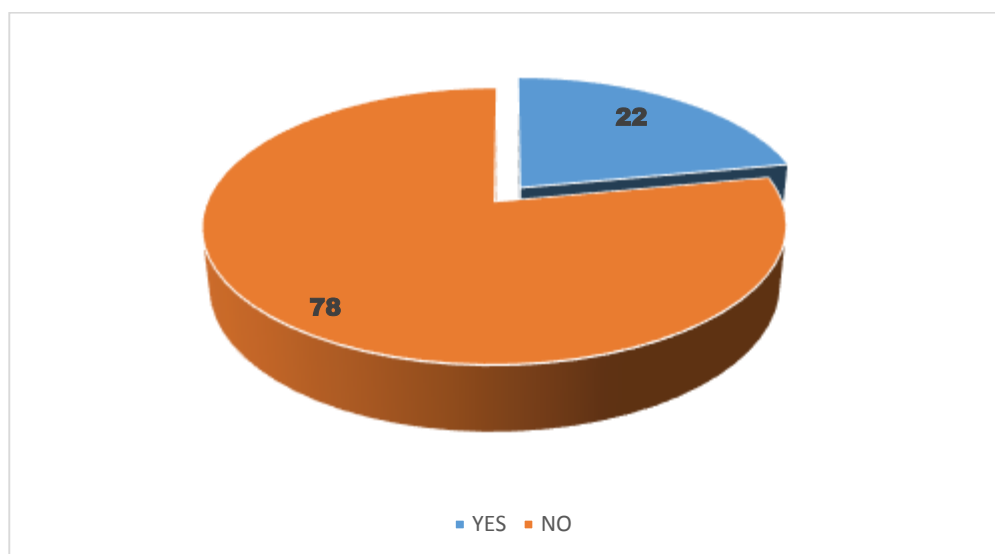
#### 4.6 Preservation of records

For an organization to attain efficiency in all its activities ranging from capturing of information through to maintenance and disposition, there should be proper methods used to preserve records with the purpose of prolonging the lifespan of useful information. Preservation can be preventive as well as prescriptive. Preventive preservation aims at preventing or reducing damage to records and to slow down the risk of deterioration. Prescriptive preservation on the other hand identifies and treats damaged records.

##### 4.6.1 Disaster Preparedness and Management Plan for Records

The absence of a disaster plan means that organizations cannot guarantee accessibility and usability of the information materials they house in the event of a disaster (Hlabaangani & Mnjama, 2008). The researcher sought to find out if the ministries had disaster preparedness and management plan for their records. The responses are illustrated as shown in Figure 4.21.

**Figure 4.21: Written disaster management plan by the Ministries**



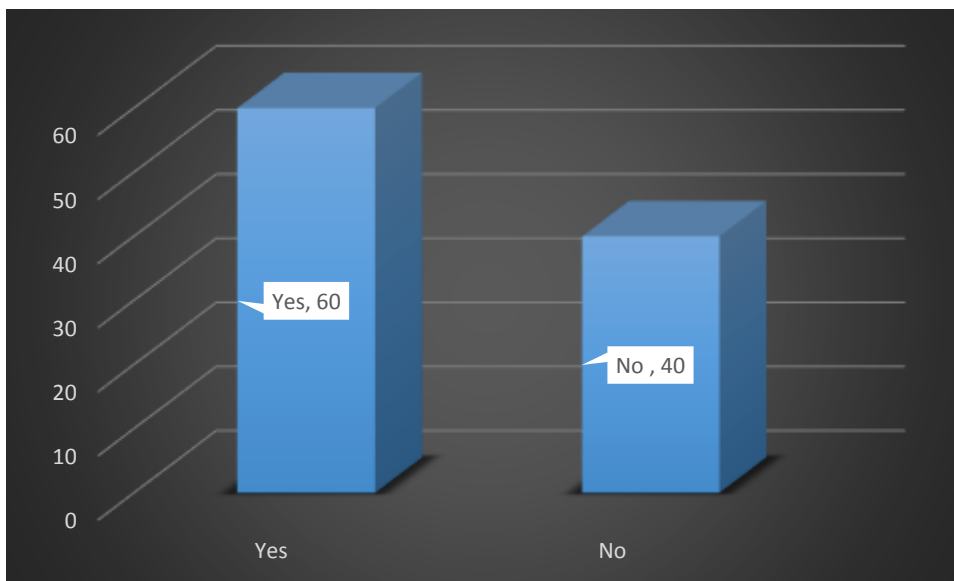
*Source: Field data, 2020*

Report generated in Figure 4.21 shows that 78 (78%) out of the total respondents indicated “No” to the question “Does your Ministry have a written disaster management plan?” which represents the majority whiles 22 (22%) of them indicated “Yes”. It can be deduced from this finding that majority of ministries do not have a written disaster management plan to follow in dealing with disaster.

#### 4.6.2 Records Storage

Storage refers to the housing of records. In accordance to the life cycle model of records management, records in their current or active stage should be stored in the offices whereas semi-current records are stored at the records center and non-current records stored in archival repository. The research sought to ascertain if the ministries had adequate accommodation for keeping their records. The responses can be seen in Figure 4.22.

**Figure 4.22 Adequate accommodations for keeping records**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

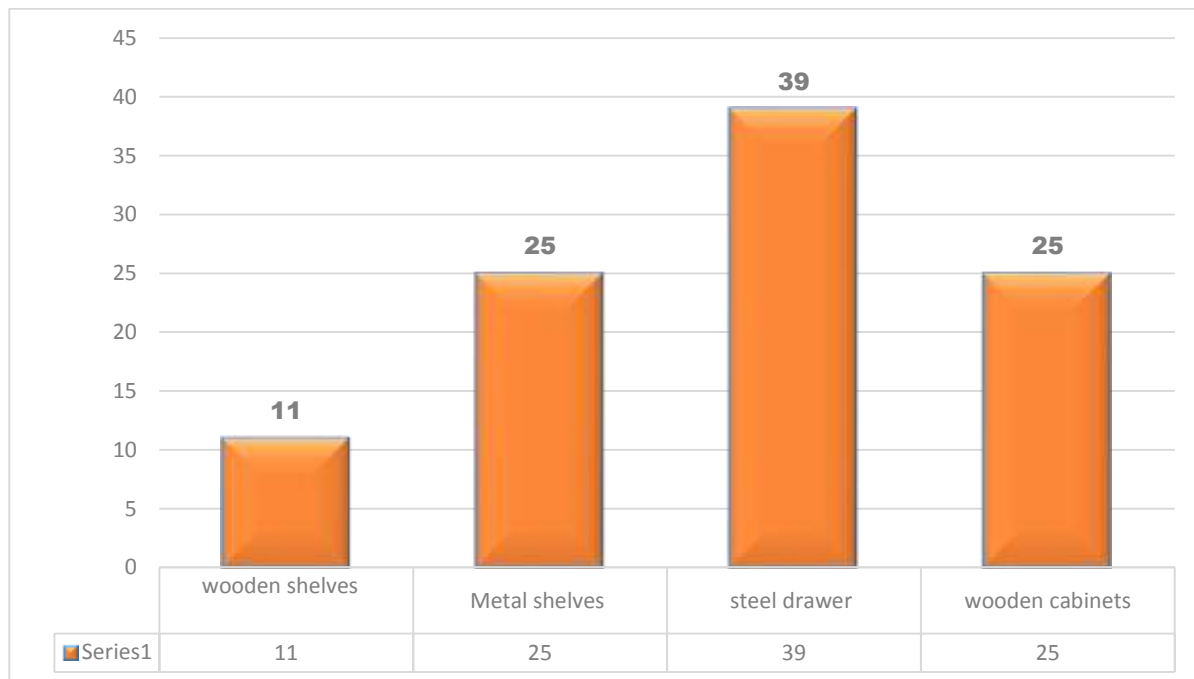
Figure 4.22 shows that more respondents numbering 60 (60%) responded positively to the fact that the ministries had adequate accommodation for keeping their records while 40 (40%) of them indicated “No”. It can be gathered from these findings that, most of the ministries had adequate accommodation for keeping records.

#### 4.6. 2 Storage Equipment.

Records are stored in a variety of storage equipment for protection and safe keeping. There is a need for records storage in offices, records centers and archival repositories. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of storage equipment used in storing records in the records offices.

The responses are depicted in Figure 4.23

**Figure 4.23 Records Storage Equipment.**



Source: Field data, 2020

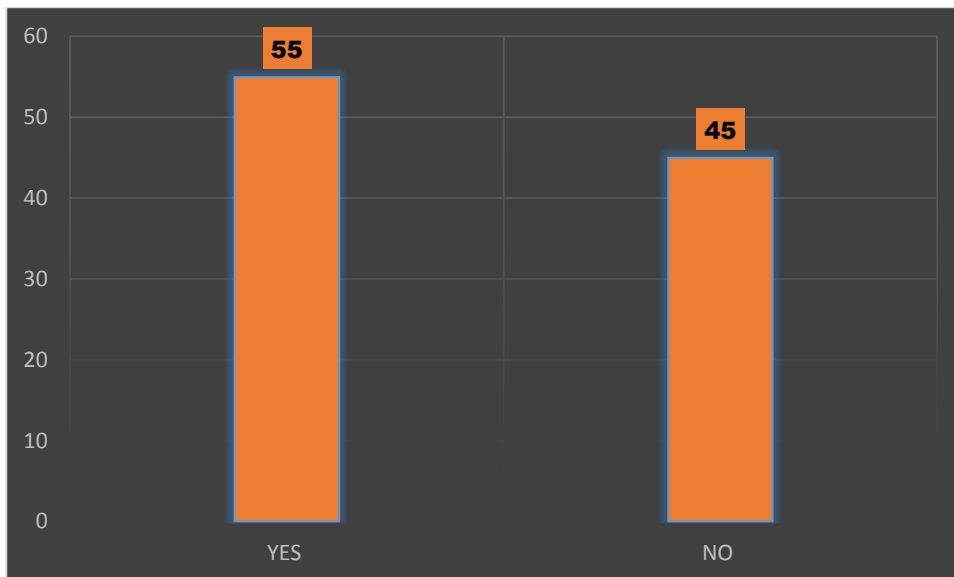
From Figure 4.23 out of the 100 respondents, 39 (39%) indicated that they used steel drawers for storing their records. Secondly, 25 (25%) of the respondents indicated they used metal shelves.

In addition, another 25 (25%) of the respondents stated they used wooden cabinets and lastly 11 (11%) indicated that they used wooden shelves.

### 4.6. 3 Fumigation of the records offices

Fumigation or disinfestation is a method of preventing infestation in offices, homes and places of convenience. Respondents were asked to indicate if their ministry periodically fumigated or disinfected their records offices. Responses are shown in Figure 4.24

**Figure 4.24 Fumigation of records office**



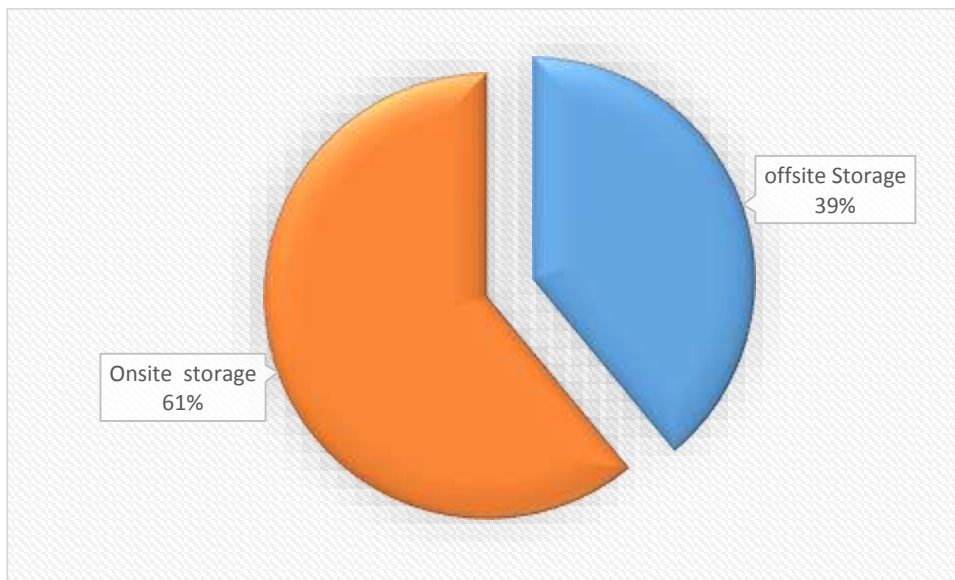
*Source: Field data, 2020*

Figure 4.24 shows that 55 (55%) respondents, being the majority indicated that their offices were periodically fumigated or disinfected. whiles 45 (45%) indicated “No”. It can be inferred from the finding that, most of the ministries periodically fumigated or disinfected their records offices/registries to prevent infestation of documents.

#### 4.6.4 Methods used to safeguard records

Methods used to protect or safeguard records are very critical. Onsite and offsite storage are some methods used to protect records from disasters. Onsite storage is where records are stored within the Ministry while offsite storage stores records away from the Ministry. In view of this, respondents were asked to indicate the methods used to protect or safeguard records. Responses can be seen in Figure 4.25.

**Figure 4.25 Methods used to protect or safeguard records**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.25, it is seen that 61 (61%) of the respondents indicated the use of onsite as methods used to safeguard records whereas 39 (39%) of them indicated the use of offsite or remote storage to safeguard records. This finding is an indication that most of the ministries use onsite storage methods as a means of protecting records.

#### 4.6.5 Disaster detection systems

The availability of disaster detection systems in ministries shows the level of preparedness in times of a disaster. Respondents were asked to indicate the types of disaster detection system they had in the records offices. Their responses are illustrated in Table 4.6

**Table 4.6 Disaster detection systems in ministries**

<b>Types of Disaster Detection System</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Smoke & heat detectors	37	37.0
Sprinkler system	8	8.0
Fire extinguishers	52	52.0
Water detectors	3	3.0
Total	100	100.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Table 4.6, 52 (52%) of the respondents indicated they had fire extinguishers representing the majority, followed by 37 (37%) who indicated they had Smoke & heat detectors, while 8 (8%) and 3 (3%) indicated they had sprinkler systems and water detectors respectively. From the findings, it can be deduced that majority of the ministries had fire extinguishers.

#### 4.6.6 Preservation of Records

There are several ways of preserving records to ensure their longevity. The research sought to ascertain the preventive methods used to ensure the life span of records as well as prevention from deterioration. The responses are illustrated in Table 4.7

**Table 4.7 Methods of preserving records**

<b>Preservation methods</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Lamination	51	51.0
Microfilming	23	23.0
Photocopying	95	95.0
Shelving	80	80.0
Binding	60	60.0
Digitizing	40	40.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

In the pursuit of preserving records in the records offices or registries, 95 (95%) of the respondents indicated photocopying representing the majority, followed by 80 (80%) indicated shelving, 60 (60%) indicated binding. Also, 51 (51%) of the respondents indicated lamination, while 40 (40%) of the respondents indicated digitizing. Microfilming appeared to be the least, indicated by 23 (23%) respondents. These findings give a clear picture that the majority of the ministries use photocopying as a method of preserving their records.

#### **4.7 Training and Skills in the management of public sector records**

Records management requires appropriate skills from records officers to effectively manage records to achieve good results. According to the State Records Authority of New South Wales (2004), records management functions are changing extensively with increasing business, regulatory, community and technological demands and a raft of new standards to meet. Records managers and all those responsible for recordkeeping need to be armed with the appropriate skills and knowledge to:

- i. Effectively support business and meet corporate goals

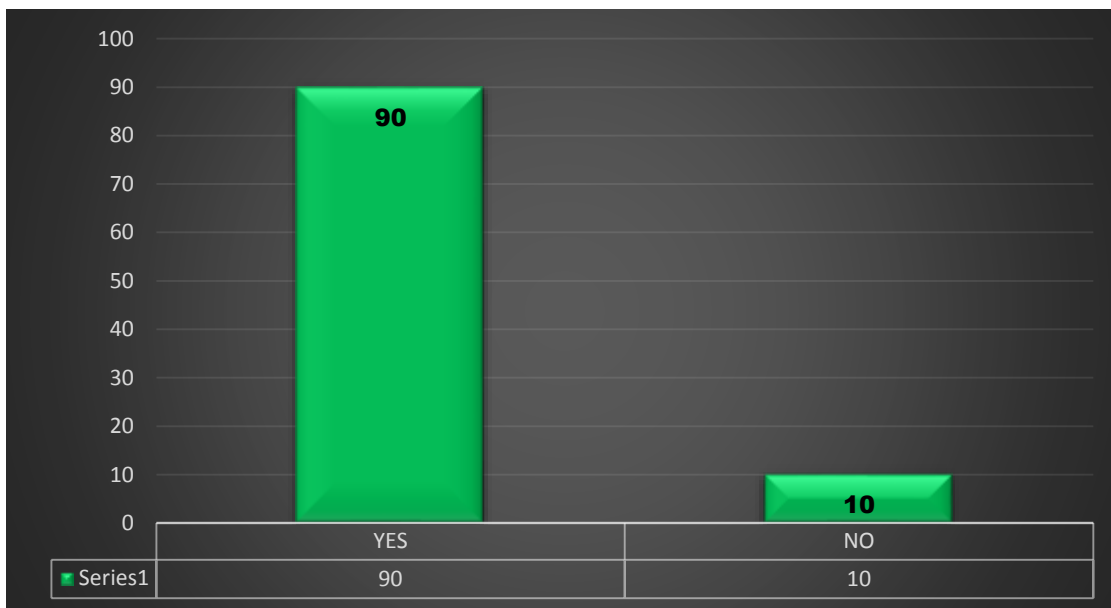
- ii. Implement best practice and ensure the organisation is accountable, and
- iii. Comply with the requirements of the legislations regulating records management.

With the above in mind, the research sought to find out the skills of records officers at the ministries in charge of the management of records. The results are presented in this section.

#### 4.71 Records Management Training Programmes

Respondents were asked to indicate if training programmes were organized by their ministries for records staff. Their response is shown in Figure 4.26

**Figure 4.26 Training in records management**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

As can be seen in Figure 4.26, 90 (90%) of the respondents confirmed that they receive training on records management representing the majority whiles 10 (10%) of them indicated otherwise.

#### 4.7.2 Mode of training

Respondents were asked to indicate how the training was carried out? The responses are captured in Table 4.8

**Table 4.8 Mode of training**

<b>Mode of Training</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
On-the-Job training	35	35.0
Seminar/workshops	60	60.0
Publications on records management	4	4.0
Library with current trends in records management	1	1.0
Total	100	100.0

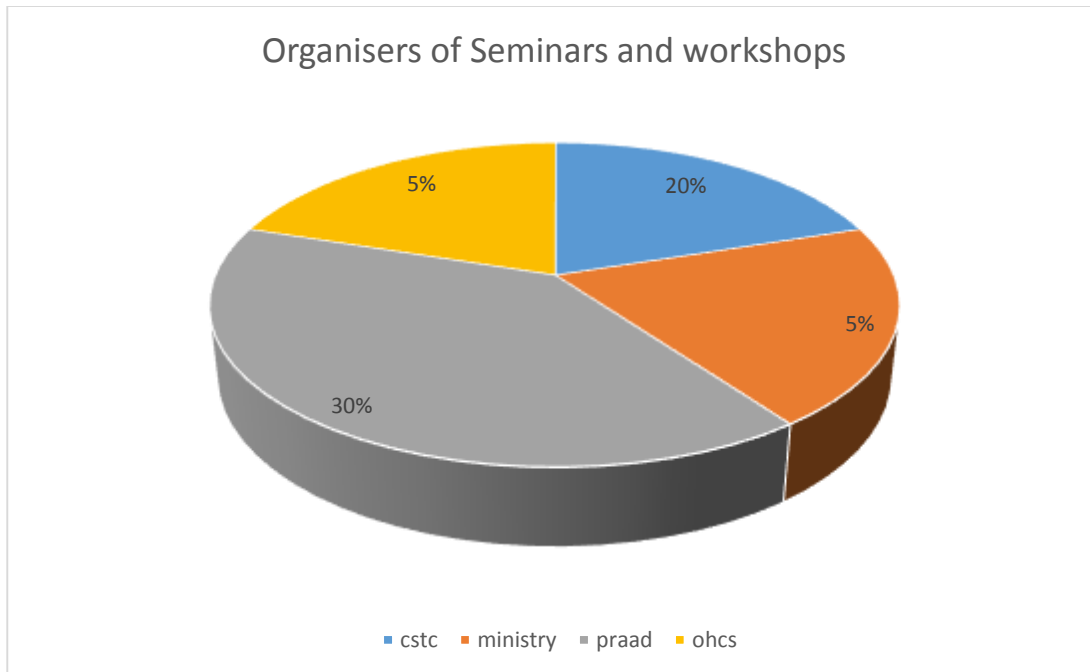
*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Table 4.8, it is seen that majority of the respondents numbering 60 (60%) indicated that, they attended seminars/workshops, followed by 35 (35%) who indicated on-the-job training, 4 (4%) indicated publications on records management and 1 (1%) of the respondents indicated library with current trends in records management. The findings show that on-the-job training is the means by which records officers acquire training.

### 4.7.3 Organizers of training programmes

A follow up question on the organisers of the training programmes attended elicited the responses illustrated in Figure 4.28

**Figure 4.28 Organisers of Seminars and Workshops**



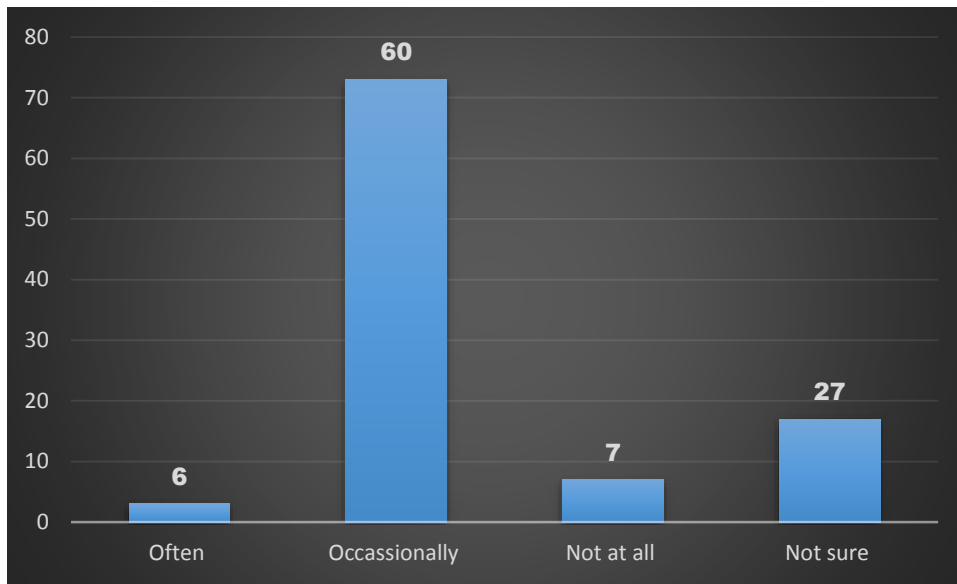
*“Source: Field Data, 2020*

In figure 4.28 above, 30 (30%) of the respondents indicated that workshops attended were organised by PRAAD, whereas 20 (20%) indicated the Civil Service Training School (CSTS) as the organisers, while 5 (5%) indicated the ministry as organisers and another 5 (5%) indicated Office of the Head of Civil Service (OHCS)

### 4.7.4 Frequency of training programmes

Under this sub-theme, respondents were asked how often training programmes were organised. The responses obtained can be seen in Figure 4.28

**Figure 4.28 frequency of training programmes for Records staff**



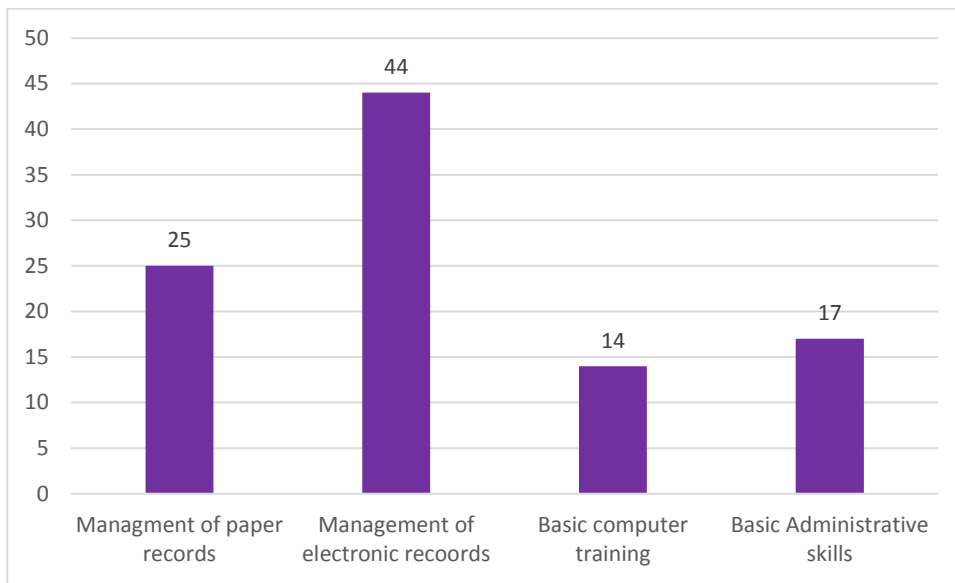
*Source: Field data, 2020*

As recorded in Figure 4.28, a greater number of the respondents that is 60 (60%), indicated that they received training occasionally, followed by 27 (27%) who were not sure of the options whereas 7 (7%) were not sure and 6 (6%) representing the least number of respondents indicating often. The results above indicate that training programmes are organized occasionally for records officers in the ministries

#### **4.7.5 Need for additional training in records management**

In a follow-up question on training, respondents were asked to indicate areas they would need further training in relation to records management. Their responses are illustrated in Figure 4.29.

**Figure 4.29 Areas for additional training in records**



*Source: Field data, 2020*

From Figure 4.29, 44 (44%) respondents indicated the need for electronic records management, followed by 25 (25%) who had need for management of paper records, whereas 17 (17%) of the respondents indicated basic administrative skills and 14 (14%) needed basic computer training. The findings indicate that for training, record officers in the ministries had varied areas of need.

#### **4.8 Barriers to Effective Records Management.**

It is obvious that no matter how resourced record departments maybe, there will still be some inherent problems. Respondents were asked to select problems associated with records and information management in their ministries. Responses from the respondents have been captured in Table 4.9

**Table 4.9 Barriers associated with managing records in the ministries**

<b>Barriers to effective records management</b>	<b>yes</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Budget Constraint	89	89.0
Resistance to change	22	22.0
Lack of Infrastructure	70	70.0
Lack of Skills of Records staff	29	29.0
Lack of management support	36	36.0

*Source: Field data, 2020*

It can be seen in Table 4.9 that 89 (89%) of the respondents indicated budget constraint as a barrier to effective records management in the ministries, followed by 70 (70%) who indicated the lack of infrastructure. The rest are as follows: 36 (36%) selected lack of management support, while 29 (29%) indicated the lack of skills of records officers. The table also recorded 22 (22.0%) respondents who indicated resistance to change as a barrier to managing records. It can be deduced from the findings that budget constraint is the major setback to the management of records in various ministries.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

#### **5.1 Introduction**

This chapter discusses the research findings in relation to the research objectives. The discussion is based on the objectives of the study and informed the collection and analysis of data. The study investigated managing public sector records in selected ministries in Ghana.

The discussion followed the themes derived from the research objectives which included:

- i. The policies and strategies used in the management of records in the ministries.
- ii. The current means and processes employed to make records accessible.
- iii. Methods used to preserve records in the ministries.
- iv. Training and skills of records management staff.
- v. Barriers associated with records management in the ministries.

#### **5.2 Records Management Policies and Strategies.**

The findings on official records management policies revealed that eight out of six ministries did not have policies on how their records or information should be managed. Policies define what information an organization keeps as a record, the procedures for managing those records, the retention periods, and procedures for ensuring their secure destruction. A policy may be developed to ensure that all government departments recognize the role of the records and archives institution in the protection of records as evidence. The organizational policy provides specific policy information and is usually accompanied by procedural information, explaining the specific steps involved in executing the process.

The first objective of the study explored the policies and strategies used in the management of records in the ministries. The study revealed that eight out of the fourteen ministries used in the study did not have a formal records management policy that outlined their records management practices. It is obvious that, every organization that operates without a policy usually ends up having issues with routine procedures, and there is a high tendency that future employees may not be able to carry on from previous staff. These findings are consistent with the works of Ndenje-Sichalwe (2017) who investigated the significance of records management to fostering accountability in the public service reform program of Tanzania. The findings brought to bear that, organizations were burdened with improper management of records that eventually resulted in poor records keeping and adversely affected accountability. Again, the findings were in agreement with the study which was undertaken by Abuki (2014) where the role of records management in public service delivery in country governments in Kenya was investigated, the study found that few ministries were guided by a policy which leads to poor records keeping practices. The study further found that administration department in the ministries directed the affairs of records offices that did not have a records management policy. It can be observed from the findings that, the purpose of a records management policy is to ensure that full and accurate records of all activities of an organization are created, managed, and retained or disposed of appropriately following relevant legislation. This will enable the organization to achieve information accessibility, control of growth of records, help to minimize litigation risk, and safeguard vital records. It also helps in ensuring accountability and transparency and protection of rights and interests of clients and the community. This finding is in agreement with the works of Iziomo (2014).

Further, in terms of strategies employed to manage records, the responses from the questionnaires as well as responses from the heads of records offices revealed that records were captured both in paper and electronic format. The study showed that, in as much as the fourth industrial revolution is concerned, most organizations including information centers were gearing towards the provision of electronic records, however, physical copies were equally important no matter the demand for electronic records. It was also stated that these records were classified by subject with the use of alpha-numeric filing systems. These findings are consistent with the works of Wamukoya (2007) and Iziomo (2014) identified that electronic records management gives unlimited storage space as compared to the conventional method of office cataloging that involves categorizing several inks printed papers in a cabinet to allow for retrieval when needed and easy retrieval through the use of retrieval tools.

Further, the study found that records offices use the Database Management system as a type of electronic records management system. This finding revealed that, the records offices have incorporated electronic management in their day to day activities. In terms of security, the study revealed that the records offices have a strict security system where a two factor authentication is employed to check unauthorized users from accessing records. In backing up their electronic records, a real-time backup method was active. These findings are in agreement with the works of Iwhiwhu (2010) where the security checks system was considered as the highest priority in the quest to implement the best strategies in managing records and also support Adu (2014).

## **5.2 Current means and processes to make records accessible.**

Most researchers in the field of records and archives have suggested records become inaccessible due to unstructured records systems in the ministries, departments and agencies, and other government establishments. All records offices in the ministries need to be restructured, and a new legislative framework has to be put in place, as well as a functional records center.

The second objective of the study investigated the current means and processes employed to make records accessible. In an attempt to find out the procedures for making records accessible, respondents indicated the use of a records procedure manual that guides their activities. Further, regarding how records were issued and tracked, it was revealed that before any record was issued out, there was a request either verbal or written. In honouring the request, information about the record was recorded in the outward control book. The necessary information to finding a particular record was recorded in addition to the identity of the recipient as well as the date of dispatch. In tracking a record that had gone out of the records office, it was found out that all the records offices tracked records through the use of a file movement book. With regards to issues of access, it was revealed that heads of units as well as action officers had access to records in the records office. However, the study further revealed that the ministries kept records which were not frequently requested but useful to the ministry. With regards to the transfer of semi-current records to the records center, it was revealed that officers of PRAAD were contracted to facilitate the process of transfer to the records center of PRAAD since they had no designated places for keeping semi-current records. This activity was undertaken annually by some ministries. It was also indicated that even though it was mandatory to transfer semi-current records to the records center, it was not done by some ministries leading to congestion in the records offices.

In entirety, the findings were in line with the works of Adu (2014) where it was found that traditionally, archivists and records managers made it possible for records to be accessible through the use of records procedure manual and tracking systems. It is also consistent with the works of Ozdemirci, (2008). Again, the study agrees with the study by Akotia, (1997) where it was concluded that it is imperative that information in the custody of government is not only be available but should also be accessible through the use of proper access procedure.

### **5.3 Preservation**

The “term ‘preservation’ in archives and libraries was used synonymously with 'conservation'. This traditional definition of preservation has limited many preservation activities, which are supposed to be applied at the early stages of the records life cycle to archives and library material. The issue of disaster control and preparedness planning needs to be taken seriously by records managers and archivists. The reason for preserving records is to protect them from harmful factors such as excess heat or lighting, fire outbreaks, and humidity and prolong their life span. A disaster management plan is a formal written plan, based on identified potential accidents together with their consequences, describes how such accidents and their consequences should be handled either on-site or off-site.

The third objective inquired into the methods used to preserve records in the ministries. In order to ensure the longevity and continuous access to records, there is the need to employ preservation activities. The study revealed that the ministries did not have a written disaster management plan to follow in dealing with disasters. Even though some ministries did not have the plan, there were measures and equipment in place to help them in case of disasters. There were fire extinguishers, smoke detectors and fire detectors. In terms of space, the study also revealed that most of the ministries had adequate accommodation for keeping their records. It was revealed that metal

shelves, steel drawers and wooden cabinets were used as storage equipment to keep records. Again, the study revealed that the ministries periodically fumigated or disinfected their records offices with the use of liquid fumigation to prevent the infestation of documents. The study is consistent with the study by Odeyemi, Issa and Saka, (2011) where the reason for preserving records is to protect them from injurious factors such as excess heat or lighting, rodents, fire outbreaks, and humidity in order to prolong their life span. The study also agrees with the works of Alegbeleye and Chilaka (2019) where disaster management plan is one of the fundamental methods of preserving records. The findings also are in agreement with Akor and Udensi (2014) in which the significance of conservation treatment in the overall preservation programme is very important since it minimizes further deterioration to items that have already been adversely affected by external and internal factors of deterioration. This eventually ensures the continued access and availability of these records in a stable and usable condition. From the findings it was observed that disaster management planning is vital in records management as the plan identifies potential accidents together with their consequences, and describes how such accidents should be handled either on-site or off-site.

#### **5.4 Training and skills of records staff.**

Record keeping requires training and expertise to achieve the right standards and practices. The records managers cannot sit idle hoping that all the records of the organization will appear in their offices waiting to be declared and incorporated into the records system. The creation of records is largely decentralized, hence the need to engage with the organization's staff. Skills required in records management includes classification and indexing, identification, analysis and interpretation, understanding of the usage of the information in a particular context, usage of the systems to manage the information, protection, and security (physical and digital).

To find out the skills of records staff in charge of managing the records, the researcher sought from the respondents if they had adequate training in Records Management. The study revealed that most ministries provided training for their records staff to acquire skills. The findings further revealed that training was obtained through on-the-job training. Again, the findings revealed that the training programs were organized occasionally for records officers in the ministries. Seminars and workshops were organized by PRAAD, OHCS, CSTS and the Ministries. The study further revealed that records staff had additional training needs in the direction of electronic records management. These findings are in agreement with the works of by Kemoni and Wamukoya (2000), Iwhiwhu (2005), and Egwunyenga (2009) where it was confirmed that records keepers especially those in Africa lacked the basic skills and competences for handling records and archives in the public sector and this problem can be reduced to the barest minimum through well-structured training programs. There is a serious problem of technophobia in most offices in Africa, especially among the older employees. Due to inadequate skills in information technology, many records managers and archivists are very conservative and have a phobia for computers. This may be due to generational gaps between the new and old records staff. In line with the study Ezeani (2017) where it was emphasized that records management staff constantly need training, especially in electronic records management. In the same vein, the finding is consistent with those of Anderson (2007) and Mazikana, (2009) According to Abuki, (2010) they all agreed that for records keepers to develop confident and to render quality services, then management needs to constantly or periodically organize a training program for them.

The ministries should liaise with records management experts to develop courses to enable records staff gain the required skills and knowledge. In particular, records managers should be authorized by management to create a records management system and to start the necessary procedures to operate it.

### **5.5. Barriers associated with records management in the ministries.**

Every organization that desires to achieve excellence is usually burdened with barriers be it internal or external. The challenges may include the absence of organizational plans, low awareness of the role of records management in support of organizational efficiency and accountability, lack of stewardship and coordination in handling paper as well as electronic records, absence of legislation, absence of policies and procedures to guide the management of both paper and electronic records, absence of core competencies in records and archives management, absence of budgets dedicated for records management, the poor security, lack of records retention and disposal policies, absence of migration strategies for electronic records and many others.

The last objective of the study explored barriers associated with records and information management in the ministries. The findings revealed that budget constraints were one of the barriers that obstruct the progress of records management. The findings are consistent with the works of Adu (2014) in which it was found that financial constraint has made it difficult for records management to be effective. It also agrees with the works of Atulomah, (2011) where it was found that limited budget made administrators find it difficult to retrieve the information they need to formulate, implement and monitor policy and to manage key personnel and financial resources. The finding is also in agreement with those by Addo (2010) where it was found that the problems in most public institutions in Ghana tend to be the inadequacy of funds. The findings also support the works of Ezeani, (2010), Ojedokun (2008) and Akotia, (1996).

Further, lack of Infrastructure appeared to be a big challenge facing the records management of the various ministries. These findings support those by Adu (2014) where it was found that in many countries the infrastructure of successful development was deficient or lacking altogether

in most public sector ministries. Hence, the increasing reliance on structural adjustment programs, within which civil service reform is a critical element.

Further, the study also found that, lack of skills of records staff immensely slows down the progress of records management practices in most of the public sector ministries especially as the world is gearing towards the digital age where most workers are considered technostressed and technophobia. The findings support those of Egwunyenga (2009) who confirmed that African records keepers lack the basic skills and competences for handling records and archives in the public sector. The author further brought to light that there is a serious problem of technophobia in most offices in Africa, especially among the older employees. Due to inadequate skills in information technology, many traditional records managers, and archivists are very conservatives and have a phobia for computers. This may be due to generation gaps between the new and old professionals which led analog information managers to perceive computers as a threat to their status as experts. Similar findings were found in the works of Ezeani (2010); Ojedokun (2008)

Again, resistance to change also contributed to barriers in the quest of managing public sector records. Change is constant but without change, there will be no improvement. The finding is in agreement with a finding of a study by Ojedokun (2008) where it was noted that older information professionals were “too reluctant to jettison the old practices for a new one”. Successful application of information handling technologies in the management of electronic records in developing countries requires an ability to overcome staff and personal resistance.

Further, the study also found a lack of management support as one of the barriers to managing public sector records among the various ministries. These findings support the work of Adu (2014) in which it was found that challenges including the absence of organizational plans for

managing electronic records, lack of records management in support of organizational efficiency and accountability. This led to improper management of records.

In summation, it can be seen that challenges are obvious in every facet of an economy and the public sector in the various ministries are not immune to these challenges. It can be explained that the barriers identified will negatively contribute to the development of proper records management in the various public sector ministries.

## **CHAPTER SIX**

### **SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

This chapter presents the summary of the study, conclusions drawn from the study and recommendations made for consideration. This chapter made suggestions on areas for further research. The study was conducted to examine how records were managed in the ministries. The focus was on professional and sub-professional records officers.

#### **6.2 Summary of findings**

The study investigated managing public sector records in selected ministries in Ghana, following the objectives including; the policies and strategies used in the management of public sector records in the ministries, the current means and processes employed to make public sector records accessible, methods used to preserve records in the ministries, training, and skills of records management staff, barriers associated with records management in the ministries.

##### **6.2.1 Records Management policy and Strategies**

The study explored the policies and strategies used in managing records in the ministries. The study found that the various ministries in Ghana did not have formal records management policies that shaped their records management practices. The study also found that the various ministries were saddled with myriads of improper management of records which eventually resulted in poor records keeping which adversely affected accountability. Also, the study found that the ministries were leveraging on electronic records management as a form of strategy to safeguard records.

### **6.2.2 Accessibility to Records.**

The second objective of the study enquired into the processes employed to make records accessible. The findings revealed that ministries used records procedure manuals to guide their day to day activities and the records procedure manual as very crucial in aiding to access records. Also, the findings made it known that offices or registries use tracking systems to safeguard their records using for instance file movement books to track their records even though they were not frequently requesting it but was considered useful to the ministries.

### **6.2.3 Preservation**

The third objective of the study focused on methods used to preserve records in the ministries. The study revealed that the ministries did not have a written disaster management plan to follow in dealing with disaster. Fumigation was done periodically disinfect their records offices/registries to prevent the infestation of documents. The findings also revealed that majority of the records offices had adequate space for keeping their records. Steel drawers, wooden shelves, metal shelves and wooden cabinets were storage equipment used to keep records. In order to prolong the lifespan of records, these methods were employed: lamination, photocopying, cleaning and dusting, binding and digitizing.

### **6.2.4 Training in Records Management**

The fourth objective of the study explored the training and skills of records management staff. The study found that the various ministries provide training for the records staff which aided them to acquire needed skills. Training programmes like Seminars and workshops were methods used to obtain skills in records management for staff which was carried out occasionally. The findings also revealed the need for electronic records management.

### **6.2.5 Barriers of records management.**

The last objective of the study explored barriers associated with records management in the ministries. They included budget constraints, lack of infrastructure, lack of skills of records staff, resistance to change, and lack of management support.

## **6.3 CONCLUSION**

It is evident that the importance of records management cannot be underlined as it ensures efficient and effective management of records and guarantees permanent value. The effective management of records allows for fast, accurate, and reliable access to information. It also ensures the timely destruction of redundant records and the protection of valuable records. In the fourth industrial revolution, electronic records management was shown as crucial and which cannot be done without proper training as the study revealed. The findings also showed that records keepers should accord the needed attention to preservation of records. The study also revealed the lack of a records management policy which resulted in improper records management. It is a principle that policies are compelling in every facet of records keeping. Critical challenges revealed in this study included budget constraints, lack of infrastructure, lack of skills of records staff, resistance to change and lack of management support. In summary, the contribution this study is to recognise the conditions necessary for effective and efficient records management systems. It is also important that records staff contribute actively to the functions of good records keeping practices to ensure efficiency and accountability. All stakeholders of records management institutions such as PRAAD should usher themselves under one umbrella and work tirelessly to address the aforementioned challenges associated with the progress of public records management in Ghana.

## **6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS**

The findings of this study have suggestions for measures to improve records management practices. Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations have been made that would be beneficial in strengthening records management as an essential part in the ministries.

### **6.4.1 Policies.**

It is very critical for all the ministries to develop a records management policy to provide directions to records management practices. The ministries can develop policies to define responsibilities and outline authorities to ensure records are created according to their business needs and processes. The policy should also ensure transparency of records and systems under their care. The ministries can have a consultation with PRAAD to develop such policies to guide their day to day activities as far as records keeping is concerned.

### **6.4.2 Management Support**

Management of all the ministries should consider records as the backbone of every organization. It was revealed that most records staff in ministries are not recognised as management staff and their presence deemed not important. It is recommended that heads of records offices should be accorded the needed recognition in order to work effectively with other departments. Given this, funds should be allocated for records staff to acquire the needed materials for progressive work.

### **6.4.3 Training in records management**

The findings revealed that there was the need for adequate training opportunities made available to all records staff. This will provide opportunities for records staff to gain additional knowledge. Training could be in the form of short courses, study tours and attachment programs. Most of these opportunities can be made possible through exchange programmes between Ghana and other countries. Also, the ministries should consult records management experts like PRAAD to develop a training programmes specifically for records staff. There can also be a joint courses between records management experts and the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana. Records staff should create records management systems and establish the procedures to operate them.

### **6.4.6 Digitization**

Based on the findings, familiarising with automated systems would help improve in records management practices. Digitizing records will speed up retrieval processes and service delivery. Computers, scanners and other electronic gadgets should be provided to encourage good practices of records keeping. This will help records staff easily locate records and make available within a short time of request. Digitizing records will prevent unauthorised access, easy identification, description, classification and quick retrieval process.

### **6.4.7 Disaster Management**

The study revealed that there was little or no plans to protect records in events of a disaster. In order for business continuation, there is the need to have a disaster management plan to draw up

procedures to manage disasters that are likely to occur. These could be fire outbreaks and flood. The plan will outline definite ways of protecting records that are vital to the organisation.

#### **6.4.8 AREA FOR FURTHER STUDIES**

Further research could be carried out in the following areas:

1. There should be similar studies by focusing on the various public institution in other regions in Ghana.
2. Again, a similar study can be conducted in electronic records management focusing on private and public institutions in Ghana

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## **APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE**



### **QUESTIONNAIRE**

**DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES**

**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA, LEGON.**

Dear respondent,

This questionnaire aims at collecting data on “MANAGING PUBLIC SECTOR RECORDS IN GHANA: A SURVEY OF SELECTED MINISTRIES”. I am an MPhil student in the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, and conducting research on the topic above for my thesis. For this reason, I wish you would find time to answer the questions posed in this questionnaire and sincerely. Your responses will be duly appreciated and treated with the utmost confidentiality. Please endeavour to provide your candid responses to the questions, and note that there is no right or wrong answers.

Thank you.

Yours sincerely

Doreen Adanuvor

(10354462)

## SECTION A: BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Please tick [√] where appropriate.

1.1 Name of Ministry .....

1.2 Gender

a. Male ( )

b. Female ( )

1.3 Age

a. 20-29 ( )

b. 30-39 ( )

c. 40-49 ( )

d. 50 and above ( )

1.4 Educational Level

a. SSCE/WASSCE ( )

b. O LEVEL/A LEVEL ( )

c. HND ( )

d. DIPLOMA ( )

e. DEGREE ( )

f. MASTERS ( )

g. PHD ( )

h. PROFESSIONAL ( )

i. Others: please specify.....

**SECTION B: RECORDS MANAGEMENT POLICIES**

2.1 What categories of records do you keep in the registry/records office?

.....

2.2 Does the Ministry have a formal policy for records management?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

2.3 a. If yes, how was the policy developed?

.....

2.4 b. If no, who directs the management of records?

.....

**SECTION C: RECORDS MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES**

3.1 How are records captured?

- a. Paper ( )
- b. Electronic ( )
- c. Both ( )

3.2 How are records classified?

- a. Name ( )
- b. Date ( )
- c. Subject ( )
- d. Others, please specify.....

3.3 What filing system is used?

- a. Alphabetic ( )
- b. Numeric ( )
- c. Alpha-Numeric ( )

- 3.4 How often are files closed?
- a. Frequently
  - b. Once a while
  - c. Not at all
  - d. other, please specify.....

- 3.5 Do you file all records in the registry?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

**SECTION D: ELECTRONIC RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

- 4.1 Do you use any electronic records management system?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

- 4.2 If yes, which of the following do you use?
- a. Database Management System
  - b. Off-the-Shelf electronic records software
  - c. Custom made/Bespoke electronic record application

- 4.3 Do you have any electronic records management policy?
- a. Yes
  - b. No

- 4.4 Is access to your electronic databases restricted to unauthorized users?
- a. Yes.
  - b. No.

- 4.5 If yes, how is the restriction effected?  
.....

4.6 Do you have computers in the records office/registry?

a. Yes. ( )

b. No. ( )

4.7 If yes, do you use the computers in managing records and information?

a. Yes. ( )

b. No. ( )

4.8 Do you have backup system for your electronic documents?

a. Yes. ( )

b. No. ( )

4.9 If yes, which of the following methods do you use?

a. Real time backup. ( )

b. Off time backup. ( )

c. Others, please specify.....

5.0 What are the procedures for managing electronic records?

.....  
.....

5.1. Are there suitable storage facilities for electronic records?

a. Fire proof cabinets. ( )

b. Temperature control. ( )

c. Others, please specify.....

**SECTION D: ACCESSIBILITY OF RECORDS**

4.1 Does the ministry have a records procedure manual?

a. Yes ( ) b.No ( )

4.2. Are there procedures for issuing out records?

a. Yes. ( ) b. No. ( )

4.3 Do you have a tracking system to ensure records issued out are returned to the records office/registry?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

4.4 If yes, please describe how the movements of files are tracked

.....

4.5 Which of the following records movement measures are in place?

a. file movement book ( )

b. file transit slips ( )

c. file census ( )

d. tracer cards ( )

e. others, please specify.....

4.6. Is there a place for keeping records which are not frequently requested but still useful to the ministry?

a. Yes. ( ) b. No. ( )

4.7 Are there procedures for transferring records to the archives?

a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

- 4.8 How often are these records transferred?
- a. Quarterly ( )
  - b. Bi-annually ( )
  - c. Annually ( )
  - d. Not at all. ( )
  - e. Others, please specify.....

**SECTION E: PRESERVATION OF RECORDS**

- 5.1 Does your Ministry have a written disaster management plan?
- a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

5.2. If yes, who developed/authorized it?  
 .....

- 5.3 Does the ministry have adequate accommodation for keeping its records?
- a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

5.4 Which storage equipment is used in storing record in the records office?

(Tick as many as applicable)

- a. wooden shelves ( )
- b. metal shelves ( )
- c. steel drawer ( )
- d. wooden cabinets ( )
- e. others, please specify.....

5.5 Do you periodically fumigate or disinfect your records office/registry?

- a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

5.6. Which of the following methods do you use to protect or safeguard your information from disaster?

- a. Onsite Storage ( ) b. Offsite or remote storage ( )

5.7 Which of the following disaster detection system do you have in the records office/Registry? (Tick as many as applicable)

- a. Smoke & heat detectors ( )  
b. Sprinkler system ( )  
c. Fire extinguishers ( )  
d. Water detectors ( )  
e. Others, please specify.....

5.8 Which of the following is used in preserving the records in your records office/registry? (Tick as many as applicable)

- a. lamination ( )  
b. microfilming ( )  
c. photocopying ( )  
d. shelving ( )  
e. binding ( )  
f. digitizing ( )  
g. others, please specify.....

## **SECTION F: TRAINING AND SKILLS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT STAFF**

6.1 Have you had training in records management?

- a. Yes ( ) b. No ( )

6.2 How was the training acquired?

- a. On-the-Job training ( )  
b. Seminar/workshops ( )  
c. Publications on Records Management ( )  
d. Library with current trends in Records Management ( )  
e. Others, please specify.....

6.3 How often does the ministry organize training programmes for Records staff?

- a. Often ( )
- b. Occasionally ( )
- c. Not at all ( )
- d. Not sure ( )

6.4 who are the organizers of the training programmes?

- a. PRAAD ( )
- b. CSTS ( )
- c. OHCS ( )
- d. Ministry ( )
- e. others, please specify.....

6.5 In what areas do you have need for additional training in records management? (Tick as many as applicable)

- a. Management of paper records ( )
- b. Management of electronic records. ( )
- c. Basic computer training. ( )
- d. Basic Administrative skills. ( )
- e. Others, please specify.....

## **SECTION 6: BARRIERS OF RECORDS MANAGEMENT**

7.1 What are the barriers the Ministry faces in managing records? (Tick as many as applicable)

- a. Budget constraints ( )
- b. Resistance to change ( )
- c. Lack of infrastructure ( )
- d. Lack of skills of Records staff ( )
- e. Lack of management support ( )

7.2 b) Others, please specify.....

7.3 What recommendations can you suggest to improve the management of the Ministry's records?

.....  
.....  
.....  
.....  
.....

Thank you for your time.

## APPENDIX B: INTRODUCTORY LETTER



**UNIVERSITY OF GHANA**  
DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATION STUDIES  
SCHOOL OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION STUDIES

Ref. No.: .....

December 19, 2019

### TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

Dear Sir/Madam,

#### INTRODUCTORY LETTER

I write to introduce to you Ms. Doreen Adanuvor, an M. Phil student of the Department of Information Studies, University of Ghana, Legon.

She is researching on the topic “**Managing Public Sector records: A survey of selected ministries**”.

Please assist her with the necessary information that will be needed to undertake the research.

Thank you.

Yours faithfully,

**Dr. Ebenezer Ankrah**  
**Head of Department**



UNIVERSITY OF GHANA

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• Tel: +233 (0) 303 937 957      P. O. Box LG 60, Legon, Accra, Ghana.      • Email: [dislegon@ug.edu.gh](mailto:dislegon@ug.edu.gh)      • Website: [www.coe.ug.edu.gh](http://www.coe.ug.edu.gh)

