

Awareness and Perception on the Implementation of Public Archives Act for the Management of Public Service Records in Kebbi State

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Abstract:- This study investigated the public awareness and perception towards the Implementation of Public Archives Act for the Management of Public Service Records in Kebbi State. Qualitative Research Methodology was used. The Population of this study comprised of 62 out of which 13 were purposely sampled. A total of seven (3) research questions were used in the study. The data collected were analyzed using thematic qualitative data analysis technique. The findings reveal that the criteria used by the institutions/ministries in Kebbi State in appraising and retaining records are the informational value of the records. On the description and arrangement of records however, the practice differed from one ministry to another. While some ministries did it alphabetically, some serially others described their records by subject and arranged them alphabetically. Similarly, registry staffs of the institutions/ministries in Kebbi State were not aware of the NAA of 2004 and its provisions as records management legislation. They were aware and implement the provisions of the civil service rules as the guiding principle in managing records of their ministries. Thus, it is recommended among others that: registry staff should be train and educated to become aware of the NAA of 2004 and its provision on the management of public service records as clearly stated in the decree, registry units of the state institutions/ministries should be empower to be autonomous as independent department not a unit within the department, the state government should make a provision to introduce Electronic Registry Database (ERD) which could facilitate and enhance the activities of the department.

I. INTRODUCTION

This study rooted its background with the realization of the roles that records play in the conduct of public administration and the significance associated to its management. Every organization needs to document its activities and this can only be achieved by creating records, which contain information relating to organizational activities that are captured in a reproducible form during the organization's course of administration or execution of its functions. Records and archives are important tools for ensuring accountability in public governance and help in

meeting the administrative, legal, financial and social value of the societies (Shepherd, 2006).

In the conduct of the state public affairs, records demonstrate and confirm the decision taken, the actions carried out and the results of such actions, they support policy formulation and management of decision making, they protect the interest of organization, the rights of employers, clients and citizens; records also help the organization to conduct business and deliver its services in consistent and equitable ways. In recognition of the vital position of public records in public governance, Idris, (2012) opined that “without reliable records government cannot administer justice and cannot manage the state resources or its revenue and it cannot deliver services such as education and health care. Without accurate and reliable records as well as effective system to manage them, government cannot be held accountable for their decisions and actions and the rights and obligations of citizens and corporate body cannot be held”.

Managing public records is an important issue of national and international concerned especially in this era of information and communication technologies which made it possible for the proliferation and increase in the volume of public records. This assertion was supported by Gama, (2004) who observed that “as modern technology a method has come to be applied to the production of records, their growth in the last several decades has been in geometric rather than in arithmetic ratio, the overwhelming nature that records are created has made its management more and more complex”.

Gama further attested that “the primary concern of records management in public organizations is the efficient, effective, and economical management of public records”. To achieve this however, public archival institutions must be guided by certain principles of records management. Policy guidelines for effective records and archival management will no doubt ensure that information is available when and where it is needed, in an organized and efficient manner, and in a well maintained environment.

The management of public records can be best understood within the legislative framework of the country in questions, weather that framework has been implemented or operated in accordance with the designated principles of action. It is against this background of the importance of public records management in line with the policy guidelines and the fact that not much is known of the awareness and perception on the implementation of the National Archives Act (NAA) of 2004 for the management of public service records in Nigeria. That this study embarks to examine, particularly by the ministries in Kaduna state. This is particularly necessary considering the fact that archival legislation has been in existence in Nigeria since 1957, and still no study to the best knowledge of this researcher was conducted to justify the state of awareness and public perception on the implementation of the Public Archives Act of 2004 as a current legislation on session.

The study focuses on knowing the types of public records and archives generated and received by the public service, public awareness on the provisions of archival act, public perception on the implementation of public archives act in the management of public service records in the ministries of Kebbi State.

➤ *Objective of the Study*

- Identify the types of public records created and received.
- To find out the Procedures used by the public service into manage records.

- Determine the perception of public officers on the implementation of the provisions of the Nigerian National Archives Act 2004 in the mini

II. METHODOLOGY

The researcher used case study research approach. According to Tellis (1997), case studies are designed to bring out the details from the view point of the participants by using multiple sources of data. Also Tellisascitedin Zainal(2007), posited that case study is significant in that it provides a ‘chain of evident’, either quantitatively or qualitatively, and are systematically recorded particularly when interviews and direct Observationby the researcher is the main sourcesofdata.

A. Response Rate

A total number of Thirteen (13) heads of registry units from various ministries and institutions in Kebbi state were interviewed. The response rate was 72%. The interview data were transcribed and presented in the following sections:

B. Demographic Information

A total number of (13) heads of registry units from ministries/institutions in Kebbi state were interviewed. The information about the participants of the study, their ministries gender, years of working experience, rank as well as academic qualification were provided, analyzed and presented.

S/N	Name of the ministry	Codes	GD	Rank	Experience	Qualification
1	Agriculture & Natural Resources	P 1	M	Unit Head	12 years	Diploma
2	Ministry of education	P 2	M	Unit Head	20years	Certificate(CPPA)
3	Ministry of environment and Natural resource	P 3	M	Unit Head	17 years	Diploma
4	Ministry of finance	P 4	M	Unit Head	29 years	Diploma
5	Ministry of Health	P 5	M	Unit Head	23 years	Diploma
6	Ministry of internal security and home affairs	P 6	M	Unit Head	9 years	Diploma
7	Ministry of justice	P 7	M	Unit Head	18 years	Diploma
8	Ministry of local government and chieftaincy affairs	P 8	M	Unit Head	26 years	Diploma
9	Federal University of Kebbi State, Kalgo	P9	M	Unit Head	25 Years	PH D
10	Kebbi state university of science and Technology, Aleiro	P10	M	Unit Head	14 Years	PH D
11	Kebbi state polytechnic Dakingari	P 11	M	Unit Head	16 years	Diploma
12	Waziri Umar Federal polytechnic Dakingari	P 12	M	Unit Head	20 years	Certificate(CPPA)
13	Federal University of Kebbi State, Kalgo	P13	M	Unit Head	28 Years	Masters

Table 1: Personal Information of the Participants

III. DATA PRESENTATION

A. Public Records Generated and received by the Public Service in Kebbi State

Records are generated and received in the conduct of public service; aim was to ensure accountability and transparency in public service. There are different types of public records that are generated and received by the institutions/ministries in Kebbi State. When asked to indicate the types of public records generated and received by the public service in Kebbi state, participants of the study revealed that, there were different types of public records generated and received by the ministries in kebbi

state. Some of the participants’ comments were identified and enumerated here.

According to P1, R1: In this our ministry, we generate records mostly in form of annual report of our ministry performance. Our staffs that are due for annual leave send us the approved copy of their application for records purpose. Our female staffs also go for maternity leave and we keep the approved copies of their applications in their personal files.

- P2 R1: We generate records in form of circulars on issues that need everybody to be aware of, such an issue of public importance. We also generate and keep

- records in form of approve released letter to any of our staff granted study leave. We receive records mostly in form of directives from the management and any records that need to be under our custody.
- P3R1: We create records in our ministry in form of memos, circulars; identification and generating list of staff that are due for promotions and also generate records on any issue that as directed by the director concerned. Furthermore, we receive and keep important records on personnel issue especially the one that has to do with annual leave, sick and maternity leave.
 - P4 R4: You mean the kind of records originated from this ministry? They mostly include circular, internal memos, annual leave applications and annual reports of our activities. Most of These records especially circulars originated from the commissioner's office. While in most cases, memos originated from the office of the directors concerned. As you said we receive records of course yes. Any document that comes from our side, this ministry we considered it a received record, regardless of its source and content.
 - P5 R1: We generate and receive records; in fact, this is our mandate. The types of records we generate include circulars, memos, compilation of financial reports, received from all the ministries for the production of annual financial reports as well as creating any financial related documents based on the directives from the commissioner. As of the received records, we receive any financial related file from all ministries and state departments for proper actions and decisions. Records mostly come to this ministry either direct from the commissioner's office or from commissioners across the state ministries.
 - P6 R1: The records generated in this ministry are medically oriented, even though we generate common records with other state ministries in form of circulars, annual medical reports, statistics of birth and death rate in the state, issuing application for private clinic operation, etc. As regards to the received records in this ministry, we receive records in form of notification letter especially when there is a tendency for the spread of disease at a particular place within the state. Majorly, these are the types of records generated and received in this ministry. The source of the records generated could be from the commissioner's office.
 - P7 R1: We are the principal records generators in this state. We generate records internally as it affects the activities of this ministry. On this, records in form of annual reports, annual leave applications, directives on public awareness campaign from the commissioner, etc. We also receive records inform of circulars, memos and special directives, notices on important state assignments from the commissioner.
 - P8 RI: Here, we generate records on issues that affect local government employees across the 34 local government areas of the state. These records include: annual compilations of LG staff list that are due for promotions or retirement, annual reports of LG income and expenditure, circulars and documenting any issues that affect chieftaincy affairs.
 - P9 R1: The types of records we generate here include: reports, special request letters direct to commissioner, circular, compiling list of socially dependent person/children, etc. We receive records like letter of complaint, notification on child abuse, etc.
 - P10 R1: Here, we generate records in form of monthly bills, financial data on monthly generated income and annual reports. Also, we receive records like application for water connection, compilation and suggestions.
 - P11 R1: You see, the records generated here are so sensitive as they affect public private transaction. We mostly generate records in form of tenders, circulars to our staff and clients, provision of tickets for the operation of the state-owned buses as well as records on the state- owned houses.
 - P12 R1: We generate records like compiling the list of registered youth clubs/associations, production of tickets for use at any stadium public, annual reports, etc.
 - P13 R1: This is a new ministry as you can see. It is now we are trying to put things in place. The records we are generating here include annual reports of our achievement, circulars and memos. We indeed received records from our commissioner in form of directives.
- *Public Records Management Procedure Employed by Ministries in Kebbi State*
- There are different means through which public records can be managed. The criteria employed by the ministries in Kebbi State to manage their records are presented in this section.
- **P1 R2:** For appraisal and retention of records, we consider the informational value of the records for future actions and decision. Description and arrangement are serially carried out. For preservation and conservation we serially describe and arrange our records for easy identification, access and use. It is that cabinet we are using to keep our records and occasionally we use chemical to prevent insect penetration to our records. As regards access and use of our records, it is strictly on permission from the director.
 - P2 R2: We appraise and retain records we consider have future information prospects. In this our ministry, we serially describe and arrange our records for easy retrieval. It is the iron cabinet we use to preserve our records for longevities. On the issue of access, we are informed not to allow any body to access registry records without management approval.
 - P3 R2: Here, appraisal and retention of records are determined by the informational content of the records. Preservation as you can see, we use cabinet to store our records. We also replace file jacket of a records when the need arises. We also apply insecticide yearly for further preserving and conserving our records. We use serial number to ease identification and access to any records under our custody. Access? We are directed not to allow even our staff to have direct access to even their personal file.

- P4 R2: Records appraisal? Mhm we only retain any records we considered important for the continuity of the activities of this ministry. We alphabetically describe and arrange our records. As for the preservation and conservation, it is the cabinet we use to ensure secrecy of our records. Access to records must be with formal approved permission from the director.
- P5 R2: We appraise and retain records based on its informational and future reference value. Preservation and conservation of records here is based on the following criteria: iron cabinet, chemical spray, we ensure that there is proper ventilation in the records designated office. Description and arrangement of records was alphabetically done. Similarly, access to our records is an issue of management concerned, it's strictly on permission.
- P6 R2: Access and use our records are strictly on official approval as we are told to maintain that as a directive. Description and arrangement is serially done in accordance with the staff file number. Preservation of our records is through the cabinet and ensures proper filing and organization of records. As of appraisal and retention of record it is done by considering the informational content of the records.
- P7 R2: The preservation and conservation measures we employed here are the use of cabinet and stand by fire extinguisher. As of access and use of our records that one is strictly based on the management directives. You asked about description and arrangement? Here it is the serial number we use as access codes to records. We also keep any records we consider important for future actions and decisions.
- P8 R2: Here we keep and maintain records considering the informational value attached to it. Description and arrangement are on serial bases. Preservation of our records is through the use of the following: cabinet, proper filing, and use of chemical. Access to any of our documents as we were directed must be based on official approval.
- P9 R2: Records appraisal is done considering the informational value of the records. In this ministry, the arrangement and description of our records is serially done. As for preservation and conservation, it is this cabinet we are using to keep our records; we also replace file jackets to ensure the longevities of recorded information. For access to our records, one must follow the formal protocol before been allowed to access and use any of our records.
- P10 R2: As other ministries in the state it is the iron cabinet we use to preserve and keep our records. For description, it is based on the informational content of the records while for records arrangement, it is done alphabetically. Access to our records is something confidential which must be on formal approval. On appraisal and retention it is the informational content matters.
- P11 R2: We retain any record considered valuable and have future prospects. It's this cabinet we use to put any records that came to our custody. For arrangement and description that one is done on subject bases for easy identification, access and use. As to our records must

obtain permission from the director.

- P12 R2: We only retain records which are considered important and can be referred to in the future for decision. Arrangement and description of our records were on subject area but we use alphabet as access point to our records. For preservation, it is the cabinet we are using, though it cannot contain all of our files as you can see some on the cabinet. Access to records in our custody is strictly on demand supported with formal approval from the management.
- P13 R2: Appraisal and retention of records in this ministry were influenced by the information content of the records. Description and arrangement were done alphabetically. As of the preservation and conservation to our records we use chemical to prevent any insect penetration to our cabinet. For access to our records we do not allow anybody to access our records except our directors or whenever we receive directive from the commissioner on that.

B. Awareness of the Provisions of NAA2004

Awareness is the bedrock for the successful implementation and compliance with records and archival act. The state of public awareness in respect of the public archival act of 20004 in the ministries under study is presented below:

P1R3: Is there any law enacted by the government on public records management? I am not aware of anything like that; I am only aware of civil service rule as a standard to be complied with by the public servant both at federal and state level

P2 R3: No, I am not aware of any government policy on public records and archival management.

P2 R3: Do you mean civil service rule? No, I am not aware of anything like that P4 R3: No, I don't know.

P5 R3: No

P6 R3: No, I am not aware. P7 R3: No

P8 R3: No, I don't think if I know anything like that

P9 R3: No, I don't know P10R3: No

P11 R3: No

P12R3: No!

P13 R13: No

C. Public Perception towards the implementation of the Provision of NAA 2004 in terms of:

Public perception in respect of the implementation of the provisions of Public Archives Act is another important issue of discussion that was investigated in the conduct of this study. The opinions of the participants on the state of implementing the provisions of the act are presented below:

- P1 R4: What do you want me to say on what I don't know? My perception is I don't know it. But if it can be available and implemented, it will definitely straiten records keeping operations, especially in terms of the areas you mentioned.

- P2 R4: I told you already we operate all our activities in line with the provision of CSR. So, how can I implement what I don't know of its existence?

- P3 R4: I don't have anything to say on this, because we are not operating in accordance with that law you mentioned.
- P4 R4: My perception on what you asked me is zero, because I don't know the act and its provisions as a national legislation.
- P5 R4: We are practicing all these you mentioned in managing our records, but not in accordance with the NAA 2004 provisions.
- P6 R4: My perception on the implementation of the provisions of NAA 2004 is negative. Because, we don't even know something like that exist.
- P7 R4: Honestly, I have nothing to say on what we don't know at the same time nor apply in our office operation.
- P8 R4: We are not implementing any of the act provisions; we are conforming only to the provisions of civil service rule. If the act can be implemented accordingly, it will improve registry operation in terms of records management.
- P9 R5: Actually, we are not implementing the NAA 2004 towards the management of our records.
- P10 R4: Even though we are doing all you mentioned, but not in accordance with the NAA 2004 provisions. On so many issues, we are referring to CSR to serve as guide for our operations.
- P11 R4: My comment on this is zero, because I don't know about the existence of the act.
- P12 R4: Mr. Researcher, we are not implementing any of the act provisions. If it is to be implemented it will enhance the performance of the unit as per managing public records is concerned.
- P13 R4: My perception on what I don't know? You can ask if any one of us has an idea on what he is asking for. The head asked the remaining two supporting staff of the unit and their response was no. Public Perception on the Compliance with regards to the Provisions of NNAA2004

Public perception in respect of the compliance of the provisions of Public Archives Act is another important issue of discussion that was investigated in the conduct of this study. The opinions of the participants were gathered on the state of compliance with the act as presented below:

- **P1 R5:** Honestly, compliance with the NAA 2004 will definitely enhance the records management practice in the entire civil service practice.
- P2 R5: Compliance with the NAA 2004 provisions will result in the efficiency in registry operations. It will further enhance to a reasonable extent the public records management practice.
- P3 R5: If it can be implemented and complied with, definitely, it will improve the records keeping culture in the entire public service practice.
- P4 R5: My perception on this is that, let the federal government necessitates the state to ensure they abide by the act provisions in their records management operations.
- P5 R5: The copy of the act should be made available to all the state ministries and they should be strictly monitored to ensure they comply with the law provisions towards managing their records.

- P6 R5: It can only be complied with if the stakeholders are oriented and educated on the importance of the act. We here even if we know about it, there is the need for a proper supervision to ensure strict compliance of the act in our operations.
- P7 R6: My perception on the compliance is that if the act can be implemented accordingly for sure it will improve registry operation.
- P8 R5: Compliance with the act will surely regulate the entire records management practice; it should be a role model towards managing public records in any public institutions.
- P9 R5: Copies of the act should be made available to us, and with this we can ensure we comply with the act provisions in the entire registry operations.
- P10 R5: How do you expect us to comply with what we don't have in place? Let us be aware of the act and its provisions before we should start talking on compliance.
- P11 R5: My perception is that we are ready to comply with any rules provisions as per as it can positively affect our work, it's welcome.
- P12 R5: You are asking me to talk on what I don't know. If the act can be implemented and complied with, it can improve our activities.
- P13 R5: Comply with the act provision will result in better registry operations.

D. Summary of the Major Findings

The summary of the major findings is as follow:

- Majority of the participants were the unit's heads.
- Majority of the participants had National Diploma in Public Administration, two of the respondent had phd and on Masters
- Majority of the participants had spent more than twelve years working in the registry units of their respective ministries.
- Majority of the participants were men. There was only one woman.

E. Types of Public Records Generated and Receive by the Public Service

This section reveals the types of public records that are generated and received by the ministries in Kebbi state which includes:

The most commonly generated records by almost all the ministries in the state included: annual reports, staff annual leave applications, maternity leaves, as well as compilation of staff list that are due for promotion. Others include issuing application form for private clinic operations as in the case of Ministry of Health. In respect of the records received by the ministries, the findings show that records in form of mails, circulars, memos, directive and files both on personnel and subject matters.

IV. RECORDS MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES EMPLOYED BY THE MINISTRIES

The major findings as regards to the records management procedures employed by the ministries in Kebbi state were:

- Records appraisal and retention: Informational content/value and future prospects of the records are used as the basic criteria for records appraisal and retention.
- Description and arrangement: eleven ministries out of the Twenty one studied describe and arrange their records serially, while six ministries describe and arrange their records alphabetically and four ministries describe their records on subject bases and alphabetically arrange their records for easy identification, access and use.
- Preservation and conservation: Measures employed by the ministries in Kebbi state towards preserving and conserving their records include: use of Iron cabinet, proper filing of records, replacement of file jacket, constant dusting of records, enough ventilation in the records room and use of chemical spray.
- Access and use: The finding reveals that access and use of public records was strictly based on official approval or directive from the management concerned.

V. AWARENESS WITH PROVISIONS OF NATIONAL ARCHIVE ACT OF 2004

Finding on this reveals that none of the participants is aware of the NAA 2004 as records management legislation. They were only aware of the civil service rules

VI. PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PROVISION OF NAA 2004

Findings on this revealed that, the perception of the public officers as regards to the implementation of the NAA 2004 was in two dimensions. As some look at it from a positive perspective i.e. they believe that it will enhance and improve registry operations if implemented accordingly. Others were of the opinion that they had nothing to share with the researcher because of their lack of awareness of the act.

VII. PUBLIC PERCEPTION ON THE COMPLIANCE WITH PROVISION OF NAA 2004

The perception of the participants as regards to the compliance with the act was positive, as they all expressed their willingness to abide by the act provisions whenever it is presented to them to use as a public records management standard.

VIII. CONCLUSION

Records and archival legislation is needed for proper management and care of public records and archives as well as for ensuring transparency in the conduct of public administration. Indeed, implementing the provision of NAA of 2004 is so central for effective records and archival management, which at same time assisted the

registry staff to manage public records in line with the National Archive Act of 2004.

The study proved that, registry staffs in the ministries of Kebbi State were not aware of the Act and its provision towards the management of public service records. This could be attributed to the fact that registry staff lack relevant academic qualification coupled with lack of attending relevant workshops and seminars in the area of records and archival management. It is an interesting finding that, all the registry staffs are ready to learn about and implement the provisions of the act in managing records of their ministries.

The use of civil service rules as a standard for managing public records was found to be very irrelevant. This is a major point of concern, as the CSR was developed to guide the conduct and attitude of public servants generally. Likewise, the NAA 2004 was specifically designed to guide the registry staff/records and archival managers in ensuring effective and efficient management of public servant records. Even though, the CSR can still be a reference point to registry staff as public servant, but their work should be carried out in compliance with the NAA 2004 provisions.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are made:

- Stakeholders in the Kebbi State Ministries should encourage the transfer of any public records to registry department either the one created within the ministries or received from another source.
- Registries units should liaise with the management to employ other records preservation and control measures to ensure adequate security and protection of public documents against any form of disaster.
- Registry staffs in Kebbi State should be educated and oriented on the content of the Act, so as make them aware with the act and its significant towards registry operations.
- Registry staffs should also be provided with the comprehensive copy of the act, so that they can use it as a manual in discharging their assignment.

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