

## ASSESSMENT OF MANAGEMENT OF ARCHIVAL RECORDS IN MINISTRIES OF YOBE STATE, NIGERIA.

By

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### Abstract

The objective of the study was to assess and determine the types of archival records generated in Yobe state Government ministries and how they are managed and accessed. The target population for the study comprised of 10 Yobe State Ministries. A total of 10 record officers in 10 selected ministries in Yobe State were drawn as sample size. Questionnaire and observations were used to collect data for the study. The data collated was presented and analyzed using distribution tables. The study found among others that Yobe State Ministries generated different types of archival records with varying degree of value worthy of permanent preservation for continuity in governance, research and planning for future development. Similarly, archival records management in terms of storage system, disaster preparedness and archival records retention policy and recovery plan among others in most of Yobe State Ministries do not meet the required minimum standard in line with global best practices. Arising from the findings of the study some recommendation were made which includes; Yobe State Government Ministries should well harness the various type of records identified and appraised with archival value for good governance, accountability, continuity and planning for a better tomorrow.

**Key words: Management, records, archival records, accessibility.**

### Introduction

Information recorded in paper and electronic files help managers, particularly chief executives to direct, control, communicate, plan, formulate policies and make decisions. Popoola (2000) observed that “the availability of records is crucial in attaining organizational goals. Perhaps more important is the proper management of these records. To be of maximum value, records must be organized and properly managed.” (p38-39). Management of archival records entails the practice of maintaining archival records of an organization; this may include classifying, storing, and securing the records. In a nutshell, the records of an organization should be kept properly to give easy access to users, as records have great potentials to the organization that created them.

The desire to keep and use records of knowledge and information for reference and permanent preservation can be linked to the earliest time of human history. History has showed how people of the ancient era kept records of their thoughts and experiences on items at their disposal. Clay-tablets, papyrus, cuneiform, palm-trees, bark of trees, animal skins, stones, etc, for example, were used for some purposes and historical documentation. Maidabino (2010) indicated that With the development of paper and other non-textual documentary forms such as films, photographs, still and motion pictures, videotapes and related machine readable forms, archival records then continue to appear on special physical characteristics. It is in view of this that this study was designed to assess the management of archival records in ministries of Yobe State, Nigeria.

### **Statement of the problems**

The need to investigate the management of archival records in Yobe State Government Ministries emanated in view of the critical importance of archival records in the society. This importance led to agitations from the general public mostly researchers, educationist and historians on a need to have particular records of given ministries. Of great concern is that available records are accessed with difficulty or not having them in a proper condition. As a result of this the researcher embarked on this study to determine the management of archival records in Yobe State Government Ministries.

### **Research Questions**

The study was designed to address the following questions:

1. What types of records are generated in Yobe State ministries?

2. How are the records preserved, conserve and secured in Yobe State Ministries?
3. To what extent are archival records accessible to users in Yobe State Ministries?
4. Who are the Custodians of Archival Records in Yobe State ministries?

### **Literature Review**

Records generally and archives in particular are like human beings, they undergo certain stages of development, as human beings grow from childhood to adulthood and to old age stage; so also records pass from current, semi current and to non-current stages. Russell (2001) considered records to be all documentary materials like correspondences, forms, reports, drawings, maps, and photographs or any of their characteristics in various physical forms, be it paper, cards, microfilms tapes and other forms which could be preserved for a short or long period of time.

On the other hand, Shellenberg in Bizi (2010) defined archives as those records of any public institution which are adjudged worthy of permanent preservation for reference and research purpose and which have to be deposited or selected for deposit in an archival institution. Aina (2002) viewed archives as any records created or received by an organization whether public, private or by individuals in the course of their official business and which have been selected for permanent preservation because of their enduring value. Abioye (2002) as cited in Wagner defined “archival materials” as that part of the documentary materials (records), resulting from the administrative activities of an agency, which has been selected on determined criteria to be preserved temporarily or permanently for legal, administrative and/or historical purposes.

The word archives have three potential meanings: materials, location and agency. Materials refer to all historical records (not just documents and manuscripts but videos, disks, and other tangible forms as well held and preserved by an institution. Location is the building or place where materials are stored, also called a repository. Agency is a programme responsible for maintaining and making available historical records which can vary from federal, state or local government.

The history and practice of archiving can be traced to the ancient great river of the Nile and Tigris of the empires of Assyria, Babylon and pharaonic Egypt. Ayobami (1999) stated that, people settled along the river banks; this led to urbanization, trade, commerce and accumulation of graphic records, during these periods records were coated on durable writing materials such as parchments, papyrus, clay tablets, cuneiforms, animals' skin etc. Abioye (2002) maintained that the invention of writing served as great impetus to the survival and keeping of early archives.

Darambola (1998) stated that the records produced were preserved in strict secrecy and under close protection; they were often kept in locked rooms, sacks and boxes. The records were open to the public either for academic or information searches they were consulted only when it was legally justified. Preservation of records in this period was mainly to serve the legal and administrative purpose of the government. Chaterera (2016) in Mosweu and Rankemane (2020) posited, for government to achieve not only good governance, but also effective service delivery and accountability, good records management practices must be a norm. Venson et al. (2014) in Mosweu (2022) showed that

good records management practices can aid decision-making in government circles and thus should be recognised for this role.

In Nigeria the development of public archives can be linked to the colonial time. The colonial agents and officers of that time had to ensure the production, preservation and protection of public records of historical, commercial, economic, legal and other values. The National Archives of Nigeria was established on 1st April, 1954 by an administrative order of the then governor general of Nigeria, according to Adeyemi (1995). Earlier in 1951, Professor Dike was commissioned by the Nigerian colonial government to survey the records of the Nigerian government to make recommendation. In his reports published by the Nigerian government in 1954. Dike recommended among others, that all records of the Nigerian government which were no longer being used for day to day administration should be housed in one central office.

According to Uturu (2000), today the National Archives of Nigeria have established ten branches nationwide with administrative headquarters in Abuja. He further pointed out that the branch offices were opened in the following chronological order “Benin and Sokoto 1982, Akure and Ilorin 1985, Owerri, Calabar and Port-Harcourt 1986 and finally Jos and Abeokuta 1989.

### **Methodology**

The Design of the study adopted is survey because it is ideal and capable of providing accurate and comprehensive data or information for the research. The area of the study is Yobe State, including ten {10} Yobe State Government Ministries. The overall total of {10} records officers from the 10 ministries under study were used as sample and a probability

sampling technique was used because it draws randomly from the wider population and easier when making generalization. Questionnaire method of data collection and observation were used for the study.

In order to ensure that the instruments were capable of eliciting the required data, they were subjected to face validation by experts and scholars in the area of research to check and make necessary inputs to strengthen it as appropriate. The reliability of the instrument was established by conducting a pilot study within two weeks at the ministries under investigation. The copies of the questionnaire were produced and distributed to the related staff by the researcher. The staff were reached at their various ministries. Interviews and observation were run concurrently as appropriate. The data collected that relates to the research questions were analyzed using cumulative frequency tables and percentages.

## Results and Discussions

This section presents the results and discussion. Out of the 10 copies of the questionnaire distributed to the respondents, all the (100%) were returned duly completed and found usable for this study.

Research Question One: What types of records are generated in Yobe State ministries?

**Table 1: Types of Archival Records Generated in Yobe State Ministries**

Archival Records	Ministries									
	works	LS	Housing	FEP	Agric	Health	WA	Justice	LGCA	YSD
Appointment and Promotion	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Staff Disciplinary	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Staff Posting and Transfers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Handover notes	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Historical Records	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Court Proceedings	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
Litigation Pages	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
Court Judgments	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
Receipt and Invoices	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Budget Drafts	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Payment Voucher	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Contract Papers	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Legislative Records	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	X
Minutes of Meetings	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Security Reports	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	√	X
Chieftaincy Records	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	√	X
Development Plans	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

**Key:** X - Not generating the records;

- √ - Generating the records; LS - Land and Survey; FEP - Finance and Economic Planning; Agric - Agriculture; WA - Women Affairs; LGCA - Local Government and Chieftaincy Affairs; YSD - Youth and Social Development

Table.1 shows that types of Archival records generated in Yobe State Ministries were numerous and that certain archival records were common to all ministries such as appointments and promotions records while others were peculiar with some ministries depending on their nature such as litigation pages and chieftaincy records. Other factors that played a role in the differentiation can be attributed to the fact that the ministries themselves were aimed at providing task within their jurisdiction as being provided for in their terms of reference. This is supported by Adam's (2005) observation that the availability of records is

crucial in attaining organizational goals. This implies that, Yobe state ministries generate records of all kind towards the attainment of their organizational goals.

Research Question Two: How are the records preserved, conserve and secured in Yobe State Ministries?

**Table 2: Preservation, Conservation and Security of Archival Records in Yobe State Ministries.**

Preservation, Conservation and Security strategy	Ministries									
	works	LS	Housing	FEP	Agriculture	Health	WA	Justice	LGCA	YSD
Purposely designed structure	X	X	X	X	X	√	X	√	X	X
Specialized storage system	X	√	√	√	√	√	X	√	√	X
Fumigation	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√
Enhanced security system	X	X	X	X	√	X	X	√	X	X
Standard handling procedure	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√	√

Table 2 reveals that only two ministries (Health and Justice Ministries) out of ten Ministries house their archives in a purposely designed structure that has all it takes to keep archival records securely. The rest use available office block to house their records. Archival Records Management in terms of storage systems, disaster preparedness, and archival record retention policy and recovery plan (among others) in most of Yobe State Ministries do not meet the required minimum standard in line with global best practice as this can be seen in many ministries as they lack modern storage system or gadgets, purposely designed building is also lacking with the exception of only two ministries of health and justice.

**Research Question Three: To what extent are archival records accessible to users in Yobe State Ministries?**

**Table 3 Extent of Accessibility to Archival Records in Yobe State Ministries’ Archives**

Type of Archival Record	Ministries									
	works	LS	Housing	FEP	Agriculture	Health	WA	Justice	LGCA	YSD
Appointment and Promotion	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2
Staff Disciplinary	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Staff Posting and Transfers	1	3	1	1	1	2	1	1	2	1
Handover notes	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Historical Records									2	
Court Proceedings								1		
Litigation Pages								1	2	
Court Judgments								1		
Receipt and Invoices	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Budget Drafts	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Payment Voucher	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Contract Papers	2	2	2	2	2	1	2	1	3	2
Legislative Records								2		
Minutes of Meetings	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2	2
Security Reports								3	3	
Chieftaincy Records									3	

**Key:** Highly accessible – 1; Accessible – 2; Undecided – 3; Rarely Accessible- 4

Not Accessible - 5

This table shows that archival records in Yobe State Ministries have varying levels of access depending on the ministry, record type and above all record content/sensitivity. On the whole, one can confidently say that archival records in Yobe state ministries are accessible and are being put to use for the purposes mentioned in the table. Archival records in Yobe

State ministries are generally accessible without any hitch as individuals are granted access to records provided they fulfill the entire requirement needed of them by the ministries.

**Research Question Four: Who are the Custodians of Archival Records in Yobe State ministries?**

**Table 4: Custodians of Archival Records in Yobe State Ministries.**

STAFF	Ministries									
	works	LS	Housing	FEP	Agric	Health	WA	Justice	LGCA	YSD
Archivists										
Clerks	√	√	√	√			√		√	√
Librarians					√	√		√		

The above table reveals that no single archivist is engaged in the management of records in Yobe State Ministries. Clerks with some amount of training on records handling were the ones providing the service in most of the ministries while Librarians were in some instances converted to Archivists in the Ministries of Agriculture, Health and Justice.

**Recommendations**

Arising from the findings of this study, the following recommendations were made:

1. There is the need for the various types of records identified and appraised with archival value worthy of permanent preservation in Yobe State Ministries to be well harnessed for good governance, accountability, continuity and planning for a better tomorrow.

2. There is need for Archival Records in Yobe State Government Ministries to be properly managed in line with global best practice as this will prevent irreplaceable loss of data that aids the understanding of yesterday for today and tomorrow.
3. There is need for Yobe State Government Ministries to have an improved access to declassified archival content that will enhance research quality, informed decision and good governance as appropriate.
4. There is need for training and retraining of staff and for professionals (archivists) to be employed.
5. Yobe State Government Ministries need to improve performance and service delivery in the record center

## **Conclusion**

Yobe State Ministries generated different types of archival records with varying degree of value worthy of permanent preservation for continuity in governance, research and planning for future development. Based on the findings of the study, it could be concluded that different types of Archival Records generated by Yobe State Ministries are not conserved, preserved and secured properly. They are mostly being managed by non-professionals (Archivists) in almost all the ministries without a unified retention policy that will guide their operation, disaster preparedness and recovery plan which gives room for error that could lead to loss of valuable irreplaceable archival record. However, these records are generally accessible without any hitch or difficulty.

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