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Summer 7-1-2023

## RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SOME SELECTED METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLIES IN GHANA

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EFFAH, ERNEST MR. and FRIMPONG, AKWASI DUFFOUR MR., "RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN SOME SELECTED METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLIES IN GHANA" (2023). *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*. 7758.

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**RIGHT TO INFORMATION ACT AND RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES IN  
SOME SELECTED METROPOLITAN ASSEMBLIES IN GHANA**

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## ABSTRACT

Every organization requires records. Transparency, accountability, and efficient service delivery are all enhanced by effective records management. The capacity to exercise one's right to access records is contingent on effective records management and its availability in government ministries and public bodies. The study investigated the records management and the right to information in some selected metropolitan assemblies in Ghana. These selected metropolitan assemblies include the Accra Metropolitan Assembly, Tamale Metropolitan Assembly, and Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly. A survey research design was used to carry out the study. A total of 80 participants were used for the study. Questionnaires were used as the data collection instrument which resulted in a 100% response rate. Descriptive analysis was used for the findings which revealed that the assembly manages and keeps their records updated and records are restricted to the public domain, there is also an association between restrictions and access to records of the assembly, additionally, the majority of the staff are familiar with the assembly's records management legal framework, and this majority of people were aware of the importance of maintaining and disposing of manual and electronic records. Also, majority of the respondents are aware of the Freedom of Information Act. However, majority of the respondents also indicated that there were no preparations made in the metropolitan assemblies towards the implementation of the Right to Information. The study recommends that the metropolitan assemblies include a records management budget in the entire budgeting structure of the assembly.

**Keywords:** Right to Information Act, Records management, Metropolitan Assembly, Legal framework, Ghana,

## **INTRODUCTION**

Society is evolving quickly, and quite possibly the main feature of society which is information dispersal has not slackened. In just the past decade, there has been a vivid change in society's outlook of what information is, and how much of it government institutions should make accessible to citizens. There is more demand for transparency and answerability in government. Presently, technology has also made it a possibility to disseminate great amounts of information swiftly. Thus, there is more information available than ever before. information is a public asset that can be utilized to deliver esteem added value and products (Popoola, 2000). Research findings of ISO (2001, p.15489) revealed that "the procedures responsible for the efficient and systematic control of the creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposition of records are referred to as records management, as well as the procedures for receiving, maintaining, documenting, and disseminating information about business activities and transactions in the form of records". The International Foundation for Information Technology (2010) also describes a record as that thing that addresses evidence of the existence and that can be utilized to reproduce or demonstrate the existence, paying little mind to medium or attributes. Similarly, Shephard and Yeo (2003) explained that records management is "the field responsible for the effective and deliberate control, creation, receipt, support, use, and disposition of records".

Records management targets accomplishing the best recovery of information and lessening expenses to improve the productivity of record-keeping measures. The basis for accountability and transparency in a constitutional republic is the extent to which individuals have access to information to aid them in determining whether the government is transparent or not. Records management and access to information are important in establishing accountability, better governance, and protecting human rights, according to Ndenje-Sichalwe and Ngulube (2009). The Right to Information (RTI) is a law to quantify the development and advancement of a country. The idea of the right to information gives people the legitimate right to get to information held by open bodies (World Bank, 2013). The Right to Information gives the stage to the work of constitutional right to information moved by any public organization and to help an ethic of responsibility in public issues. The right to information stand on the premises of idea of open and transparent government. Citizens have a legal right to know, and access to information legislation makes the government more accountable to the people it governs.

According to Adams (2006, p 92) in some African nations, “the standards of opportunity of articulation and the right to information are set out in their constitutions, for instance in Botswana, Cameroon, Kenya, Lesotho, Sierra Leone, and Zambia, their constitutions give admittance to information as a component of discourse and articulation”. The author further expressed that “in Mozambique, Tanzania, and Uganda access to information is explicitly ensured in their constitutions”. Nonetheless, the opportunity of information legislation is needed for residents to practice these rights. In Nigeria for example, media backing groups started the freedom of information (FOI) bill in 1999 (Commonwealth Human Rights Initiative 1999). By, May 24, 2011, the FOI Bill was passed into law by the two offices of the National Assembly together and on the 28th day of May 2011; President Goodluck Ebele Jonathan affixed his presidential mark to the bill to formally make it an Act.

In Ghana, the RTI Act was passed on 26th March 2019 by the parliament of Ghana, expecting the President's signature. Going before its passing, various stakeholders acknowledged that the deferral in passing the bill into law was to allow special cases of certain basic information lining around government procedures which they intended to cover from individuals as a rule (Akoto, 2012). This demonstration is to empower residents to consider the public authority responsible to guarantee that Ghanaians approach administration or official information that are official from workplaces particularly, the government working places on demand and without demand (Boateng, 2018). The Bill was designed to put into effect Article 21 (1) (f) of the Republic of Ghana's 1992 Constitution, that further states that "all people will reserve the right to information subject to such capabilities and laws as are necessary for a democratic society."

Ghana is a democratic republic with two phases of government: public and local. Local government is preserved in the constitution, as in the method of decentralization and the fundamental significant enactment. This Local Government is the most significant enactment under Act 936. The country is divided into sixteen regulatory units or regions, each led by a president-appointed regional minister. At the higher levels of local government, there are three types of assemblies, these assemblies include: metropolitan, municipal, and district. These districts are administered by District Assemblies, which the Minister of Local Government establishes, and fill in as the most elevated political expert in each district. Local government is the nearest level of government to individuals and is otherwise called a grassroots government perceived by law.

The current local government framework in Ghana targets rebuilding the local government organization in similarity with present-day culture, and also make it an ideal in Africa. Atulomah, (2011) saw that improvement in public institutional records management will assist with disposing of different noticed regulatory/administrative issues and shortcomings that cause failure in the institutions. This ensures delivery of quality services and efficient administration to serve the publics. Under no circumstances governments can function without administrative records that are legitimate. As such, when records are managed poorly can lead to an increment in cost in government. According to the International Records Management Trust (2011) the absence of records identification, retrieval, usage will result in the fall of the Right to Information law.

### **PROBLEM STATEMENT**

As indicated by Blanco (2013), information regardless of how essential or available, independent of how quick and exact it is obtained from, if it does not show proof of proper handling would be rendered ineffective. Research outcome of Adam (2006) indicates that the absence of records accessibility, the entire society does not have the evidence approved to have official duties. In this same research, Adams suggested that “the Public Records and Archives Administration Department’s (PRAAD) effective management of the records at these districts' assemblies will ensure the effective implementation of the Right to Information Act”. However, evidence on the ground shows the contrary. These assemblies are the governmental entities relatively close to the citizens, and their records must be well-managed in order for the Right to Information Act legislation to function effectively.

Additionally, in a study by Akussah and Asamoah (2015), they found out that PRAAD has been institutionally outpaced by the fast changes in the creation and utilization of electronic data media. Likewise, the office has almost no technological capacities even with the extremely unpredictable electronic information environment. PRAAD by its Act 535 of 1997 is required to guarantee that heads of public institutions ensure the proper management of their records. This is to be carried out by designating the responsibility of records management to trained and authorized officers. However, as noted by both Akussah and Asamoah, (2015) and Adams (2006), this responsibility is failing contrary to the framework of the lack of expertise in records management practices for the “creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of records”. The Right to Information Act is

new and now going through implementation challenges and as a result, the researcher has not come across many studies carried out in this area.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

1. To determine the current legal framework that provides the mandate for the management of records in the District Assemblies
2. To examine the records management practices for the creation, maintenance and use, and disposition of records in the District Assemblies.
3. To find out the challenges facing the management of records in the District Assemblies.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **The Concept of Right to Information**

Mnjama, (2003) defines “the right to information concept” as “legislation that empowers the public to approach records or information in any form in order to know what the government is up to”. The notion of accountability and transparency in government was the core reason why the right to information was established. The right to information legislature is ensure government accountability and transparency by ensuring openness in interaction of government to the entire citizen’s population. As indicated by Adams, (2006) “access to information legislation provides the citizen with a statutory right to know and makes the public authority more responsible to individuals being governed”. Therefore, “many countries that have adopted freedom of information are seeking to replace the culture of secrecy that exists within civil society with a culture of transparency. Banisar (2006) a speaker at the Open Society Institution and Deputy director of Privacy International, a United Kingdom-based human rights group, argues that the collapse of authoritarianism and development of new majority rules systems have offered impetus to new constitutions guaranteeing citizens right to access to government-held information. He likewise makes reference to the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and some giver organizations as supporting and upholding the inaction of the right to information legislation as a method of expanding government transparency and fighting corruption. The “Commonwealth Heads of Government (CHOGM) 2003 Report in its Executive Summary”

points to findings showing that nations with access to information laws are seen to be the least corrupt. To drive home this point, Stephen Harper, the Canadian opposition leader wrote in 2005: Information is the lifeblood of a popular government, without sufficient access to information about government policies, projects, citizens and parliamentarians can't make informed decisions and corrupt government can be covered up under a shroud of mystery R2K Publication, (2011). The right to access information stored by public entities is supported by the Declaration, which states: "Public bodies hold information not for themselves but as guardians of the public good, and everyone has a right to access this information, subject only to clearly stated legal limits." Even though the Declaration provides the right of access to information maintained by open entities, it is clear from the above wording that the right exists only in accordance with clearly defined legal norms. This goes further to reinforce the need for the adoption of freedom of information laws that contain such defined guidelines. Only around twelve nations on the continent have clear and explicit certifications of the right to information in their constitutions. These include Ghana, South Africa, Uganda, Malawi, Mozambique, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Ethiopia, Tanzania, Cameroon, Madagascar, and Senegal. In any case, without comprehensive freedom of information laws, the residents of a large portion of these nations can't appreciate this right. (Ojo, 2011).



## **Legal framework for the management record**

A regulation outlines the legal framework for records management and provides guidance to institutional staff on the most important records management documents (policies, standards, tools). It will also serve as a foundation for institutions to identify and prioritize new recording artifacts and improvement initiatives to solve identified gaps, according to (Luyombya, 2010). This can be done in different ways, the most identified procedures are electronic and manual ways of managing records (Evans & Rolan, 2017). A comprehensive records management legal framework is an important component that must be included in any good records management system. In the absence of a records management program, records personnel carry out their responsibilities in a haphazard manner. Because there would be no established protocols to direct the records management function, this might be exceedingly costly to the organization. Governance across the world require a thorough legal framework to serve as a guide in order to ensure that records and archives are properly managed for the organization's current activities as well as for perpetuity (Hamooya, Mulauzi and Njobvu, 2011). All business decisions and transactions pertaining to governance, administration, and operational transactions will be documented under legal framework. All records will be managed in our official recordkeeping systems, regardless of their physical format. The goal of record management is to meet operational, informational, and legal obligations. Records management systems will improve retrieval and protect the integrity, physical safety, and security of records, as well as help our compliance with recordkeeping laws. Mendel (2008) stated that “in 1990 just 13 nations had embraced the public’s right to information laws, but in the current 2020s 70 of such laws have now been passed universally, and they are under dynamic thought in another 20-30 nations” the author further stated that, “in 1990, no inter-governmental organization had perceived the right to information, presently the entirety of the multilateral advanced nations and various other global monetary foundations have embraced the right to information approaches”. The author established that in today’s world the right to information is recognized as fundamental human right as compared to that of the 1990’s where it is viewed as an authoritative administration change. Mendel further went on to opine that Democracy additionally includes accountability and good governance. That the general population has the privilege to investigate the activities of their leaders and to participate in a full and open discussion about those activities. They should have the option to survey the performance of the government and this relies upon access to information about the condition of the economy, social frameworks, and other matters of public concern. Perhaps the best method of addressing poor

governance, especially after some time, is through open, educated discussion. The right to information is additionally a vital tool in fighting corruption and bad behaviours in government (Deininger& Feder, 2009).

### **Records Management Practices for the Creation, Maintenance and Use, and Disposition of Records**

According to the International Foundation for Information Technology (2010), a record is something that may be used to replicate or prove a state of existence, regardless of medium or features. An organization creates or receives a record as a result of, or in compliance with, legal responsibilities or the transaction of business. Records management has been defined differently by different people and organizations. Records management is defined by Cain & Brech (1999) as the area of administrative and managerial concerned with achieving successful efficiency in the creation, maintenance, use, and disposal of an organization's records throughout their entire lifespan, as well as making the information contained in those records available in support of the organization's business transaction. According to Atulomah (2011), enhancing records management in public institutions will contribute to the elimination of many difficulties and weaknesses that contribute to the institutions' inefficiencies and ineffectiveness. As a result, efficient record-keeping could lead to better government service delivery to the public. Without proper record keeping system, no government can function successfully. Governments come and go, but their activities are documented and kept as records of their activities. As a result, inadequate record keeping can contribute to increased costs in government administration. Records management is important for the smooth and efficient operation of both private and public organizations Without records decisions and activities of institutions that serve as a benchmark to measure future activities cannot be executed. Is in records management that we have a rule of law and accountability because officials involved are forced to make decisions based on institutional memory. Extortion can't be demonstrated, significant reviews can't be completed, and government activities are not open to audit. What's more, individuals in government can't make an educated commitment to the administration interaction or guarantee their privileges (The World Bank Group, 2011). Griffin (2004) asserts that formal training provided to employees is very relevant in equipping the level of expertise in terms of records management. for Griffin he claims that formal training has greater advantage than informal training since it corresponds with their self-perceived level of records management competency,

claiming that the more training workers receive, the more they perceive the need for additional training and the greater their compliance with the records management program. However, because the records management training method is informal, it isn't as effective as formal training because it is impossible to assess the training program's overall impact on the organization's information culture. The development and implementation of an official records management concept, the appointment of a records manager, and the organization of a records management training program for personnel are all recommended in the Sanders (1998) study. Furthermore, the development of a formal records department and the acquisition and deployment of an appropriate campus-wide records management model, such as Windows SharePoint Server (WSPS) or another relevant system (Henriksen & Andersen, 2008).

### **Challenges facing the management of records the Metropolitan Assemblies**

In light of the last conversation of right to information principles discussed by Adams (2006), it would appear that there is still a mounting challenge to defeat for the effective formulation and implementation of the right to information law.

According to (Blanco, 2013) one of the challenges that can defeat the effective formulation and implementation of the right to information law is when there is no building capacity of the government to effectively disseminate public information. The effectiveness of the right to information would largely depend on the manner and extent to which the governments are willing to provide the information to the public. Even though there is an existing right to information legislation, but the information will remain distant and elusive owing to the lack of government programs and strategies on how to transfer, devolve, delegate, disperse and deconcentrate the vital information it possesses on the citizenry, if it is never really felt by the citizenry because then the law will remain toothless. Millar (2003) explained that without access to records, the public lacks the proof needed to hold authorities accountable or demand that corruption and fraud be prosecuted.

The writer further emphasized that “when considering having access to laws, it is necessary to establish a records infrastructure that prevents record alteration, destruction, and loss, among other things”. Millar, (2003) again said the process through which a country used to access information laws is regarded as an indication of a change in paradigm from one of privacy and concealment to one of transparency and openness. Furthermore, the ability of governments to enable citizens to seek out and access reliable, trustworthy, and accurate government records is critical to the

legislation's effectiveness. Access to "information" actually refers to "records." It is therefore impossible to provide quality access to reliable and valuable information without competent government record management.

Besides this, there is another challenge that poses against the right to information legislation which has to do with how to maintain a good quality record and information readily available and accessible to the public. The information might be made accessible and available to the general population but if it is not accurate, reliable, veritable and genuine then the FOI law would be aimless essentially because it would simply be a repository of problematic and wasted information with no value and substantial sway on people's right to information, good governance, accountability, transparency, honesty and integrity (Blanco, 2013). Another hurling challenge to the right to information is the capacity-building of the institutions which are tasked to execute the provisions of the law particularly in the context of training and development of information officers. The information and records officers who provide the information must possess the necessary abilities, skills, and competence in dealing with the rigorous nature of its work guardians and gatekeepers of information.

According to Blanco, (2013) an information or record officer so far as that is concerned ought to learn fundamental FOI laws, for example, recognizing for example which information or data are private and which information is open and accessible to the public and more critically where the information can be found. Information regardless of how imperative or available, irrespective of how quick and exact it is shed if it doesn't show proof of appropriate handling would be said to be inadequate and valueless if the people, institutions, and quality management systems are not in place to ensure the proper dissemination of public information.

In addition, the challenge is when the government denies, opposes, and disproves the exposure of information that might be strategically delicate or represent a public safety issue without the responsibility of a democratic system and political participation. At the point when the public authority starts to prevent individuals their right to know and their right to public information without any tangible reasons could lead to a deliberative battle of knowing and searching information by the individual, which could eventually lead to doubt, distrust, and discontent among government and its people.

According to Grigorescu, (2003), The right to information legislation is a powerful democratic motivation. He went on to say that increasing public trust in government increases the chances of

new democracies. The right to information is one of the most effective strategies for achieving accountability, which is a requirement of democratic governance. Essentially, the introduction of transparent institutions affects the power balance between government and society. Changes like this are necessary for democracy.

## METHODOLOGY

The systemic inquiry aiming at solving research problems is represented by a research methodology (Kothari, 2004). The researcher adopted the survey research for the study. A survey gives a quantitative or numeric depiction of patterns, perspectives, or assessments of a populace by examining a sample of the population. Thus, from the result of the sample, the researcher can make a generalised sum up to the populace (Creswell, 2013). The population of the study was the entire staff working at the various departments of the Tamale, Accra, and Kumasi Metropolitan Assemblies which was eighty (80) as shown in Table 1. A questionnaire was used to gather pertinent data for this study based on the objectives and analysed through “IBM's Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS)” version 21 descriptively.

**Table 1: Population**

Name of Metropolitan Assembly	All the sixteen (16) Departments	Records Officers	Management Information System (MIS)	Total
Accra Metropolitan Assembly (AMA)	16	8	6	30
Kumasi Metropolitan Assembly (KMA)	16	5	4	25

Tamale Metropolitan Assembly (TMA)	16	5	4	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>80</b>

Source: Field Data, 2023

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

### Legal framework for the management of records

#### *Formal Policy*

The need for a documented policy in managing records cannot be overemphasized. In light of this, respondents were asked to indicate if various districts assemblies had a records management policy. The responses obtained are shown in Table 2:

**Table 2: Formal Policy for Records Management**

Does the assembly have a formal policy for records management	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Yes	24(30)	23(28.75)	19(23.75)	66(82.5)
No	6(7.5)	2(2.5)	6(7.5)	14(17.5)

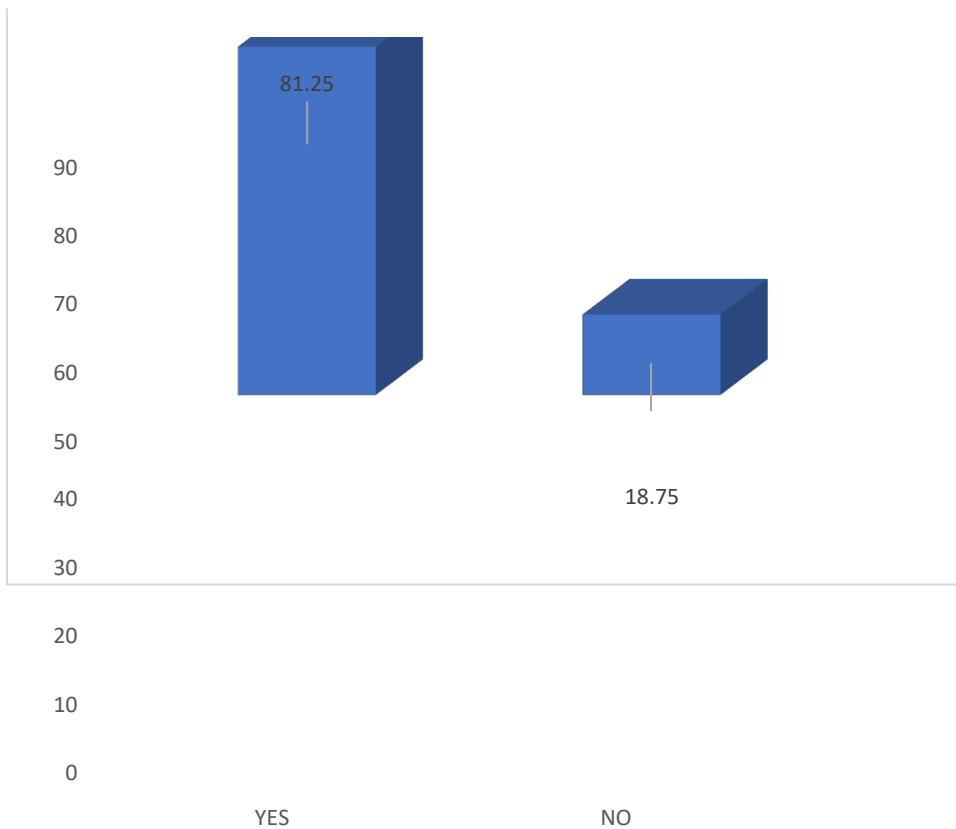
Source: Filed Data 2023

Table 2, shows that, out of the 80 respondents, 24 (30%) responded Yes, to the question asked about whether the assembly had a policy for records management, 6 (7.5%) responded No from AMA whilst 23 (28.75%) responded Yes, 2 (2.5%) responded No from KMA, 19 (23.75%) responded Yes and 6 (17.5%) from TMA responded No that the Assembly did not have a formal policy for records management. This shows that out of 80 respondents 66 (82.5%) are well informed that the metropolitan assembly had a formal policy for records management.

#### *Policy Documented and Managed*

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the assembly's policy for records management was documented or not. The results are presented in figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Policy Documented and Managed by Respondents**



**Source: Field Data, 2023**

From Figure 1, it can be shown that, out of the 80 respondents, 26 (32.5%) responded yes, the policy is documented, 4 (5%) responded No from AMA. Additionally, 23 (28.75%) responded Yes, 2 (2.5%) responded No from KMA, 16 (20%) responded Yes and 9 (11.25%) from TMA responded No that the policy is not documented. This shows that out of 80 respondents 65 (81.25%) are abreast that the Metropolitan Assemblies policy for records management is documented. A strict policy framework guided policies on records and documentation, ensuring that they aligned with work structures at the assembly level. This is in accordance with Mnjama (2003) that the context in which the transaction was conducted, the business process of which the transaction is documented by the record, the participants in the transaction, the exact date and

time of the transaction or communication, and its chronological relationship with others should all be included in a complete record. The policy regarding records makes it possible for the assemblies to maintain records for good work and decision-making processes. When the policy is distorted, the validity of records may be shaken at the local district levels. The findings affirm the right policy for records management and their documentation, as the majority of the assemblies are in support of the policy for records management.

### **Records Management Practices for the Creation, Maintenance and Use, and Disposition of Records**

#### ***Medium/ Media Information is Captured on***

The respondents were asked to indicate what medium/ media information on captured in the metropolitan assembly. Table 3 shows that out of the 80 respondents who responded to the questions, 6 (7.5%) responded paper, and 24 (30%) responded that is both paper and Electronic that is use as a medium in capturing information in AMA. Meanwhile, 5 (6.25%) responded paper and 20 (25%) responded both paper and electronic is use as a media in capturing information at KMA however 8 (10%) responded paper, and 17 (21.25%) responded to both paper and electronic is use as a media or medium in capturing information at TMA. This shows that most of the respondents are well informed of how the assembly capture information.

**Table 3: Medium/ Media Information is Captured on**

<b>What medium/ media is information captured on in your assembly?</b>	<b>Number (Percent)</b>			
	<b>AMA</b>	<b>KMA</b>	<b>TMA</b>	<b>Total</b>
Paper	6(7.5)	5 (6.25)	8 (10)	19 (24)
Paper& Electronic	24 (30)	20(25)	17 (21.25)	61(76)

**Source: Field Data 2023**

#### ***Filed Records***

The respondents were asked to indicate whether the assembly records are filed or not. The results are presented in Table 4. From Table 4.5, it can be shown that, out of the 80 respondents, 28



(35%) responded Yes, the records are filed and 2 (2.5%) responded No from AMA that the records are not filed while 19 (23.75%) responded Yes and 6 (7.5%) responded No from KMA that records are not filed and 25 (31.25%) responded Yes from TMA that the Assembly records are filed. This shows that out of 80 respondents 72 (90%) are well informed that the Metropolitan Assembly files its records.

**Table 4. Filed Records**

Are records filed?	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Yes	28 (35)	19 (23.75)	25 (31.25)	72 (90)
No	2 (2.5)	6 (7.5)	0 (0.0)	8(10)

Source: Field Data 2023

***Procedures for Establishing Control Over New Files***

The respondents were asked to indicate what procedures exist for establishing control over new files in the assembly. Out of the 80 respondents who responded to the questions of what procedures exist for establishing control over new files in the assembly, 40 (50%) responded registration, 3 (3.75%) responded indexing meanwhile 14 (17.5%) responded classification however 18 (22.5%) said registration, indexing, and classification, again 3 (3.75%) responded registration and indexing and 2 (2.5%) responded indexing and classification. This shows that most of the respondents are well informed of the establishing control over new files.

***Access to the Records of the Assembly***

The respondents were asked to indicate whether there are restrictions to the assemblies’ records. The results are presented in Table 5.

**Table 5: Access to the Records of the Assembly**

Are there restrictions on access to the records of the assembly?	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Yes	16(20)	18(22.5)	8(10)	42(52.5)
No	14(17.5)	7(8.75)	17(21.25)	38(47.5)

From Table 5, it shows that out of the 80 respondents, 16 (20%) responded Yes there are restrictions to records and 14 (17.5%) responded No from AMA while 18 (22.5%) responded Yes, and 7 (8.75%) responded No from KMA and 8 (10%) responded Yes and 17 (21.25%) from TMA responded No that the records are not restricted. This shows that out of 80 respondents 42 (52.5%) are well informed that there are restrictions to the Assembly records.

***Retention/Disposition of Records***

The respondents were asked to indicate whether there are approved authorities, policy and regulations in the assembly for records management. The results are presented in Table 6.

**Table 6: Retention/Disposition of records**

Are there approved authority/ policy/ regulations specifying the following	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Retention Period	13(16.25)	0 (0.0)	21(26.25)	34(42.5)
Destroying Records	4(5)	5(6.25)	0 (0.0)	9(11.25)
Transfer to Archives	1(1.25)	18(22.5)	0 (0.0)	19(23.75)
All Three	11(13.75)	2(2.5)	2(2.5)	15(18.75)
Retention & Transfer Archive	1(1.25)	0 (0.0)	2(2.5)	3(6.25)

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

From Table 6, it can be shown that, out of 80 respondents of whether there are approved authorities, policy and regulations in the assembly for records management, 34 (42.5%) responded

retention period, 9 (11.25%) destroyed records, 19 (23.75%) transfer to archives, 15 (18.75%) said retention period, destroying records and transfer to archives while 3 (6.25%) responded retention period and transfer to archives. This shows that there are approved authorities, policies, and regulations in the assembly for records management.

According to the study, 90% of all levels of staff are up to date on record creation and filing, supporting Atulomah's (2011) observation that improving records management in district assemblies will aid in the elimination of several administrative/managerial issues and flaws that have been identified, resulting in inefficiency and ineffectiveness in the institutions.

The mechanism for collecting and keeping manual records is also in place in the district assembly. According to the report, the manual method gives current and future operating employees the knowledge they need to understand and optimize their operations. The manual concentrates on how to utilize the equipment rather than how to maintain it, specifically how to interact with it. This means that 84% of all employees are up to date on the maintenance and storage situation. I do not dispute the observation by Williams (2006) that the modified records life cycle model, is important because it enables records management by tracking the progress of a record in a sequential process and ensuring that the appropriate processes are carried out at each stage of its existence. The study by Coetzer (2012) looks into whether records management methods and procedures are based on a recognized body of theory. The authors aim to construct a conceptual model that records managers will require to explain the current "state of the art" of the field and justify their contribution to organizational management (Yusof & Chell, 2002). Storage, maintenance, retention, and disposal are all ingrained in records management practices. They require steps in the records management process. According to the study, 45% of respondents were indecisive about record retention, upkeep, and disposal. This may appear trivial, yet it can have a substantial impact on records management decisions.

## Challenges of Records Management

**Table 7: Challenges of Records Management**

What are the challenges the assembly faces in managing records	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Budget Constraints	11(13.75)	7(8.75)	0 (0.0)	18(22.5)
Resistance To Change	5(6.25)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	5(6.25)
Lack Of Infrastructure	1(1.25)	0 (0.0)	2(2.5)	3(3.75)
Lack Of Skills of Records Staff	1(1.25)	9(11.25)	0 (0.0)	10(12.5)
Lack Of Management Support	2(2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2(2.5)
All	1(1.25)	9(11.25)	5(6.25)	15(18.75)
Budget, Res Charge, M. Support	4(5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	4(5)
Budget, Change, Infrastructure	1(1.25)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	1(1.25)
Budget, Change, Skills, MA. Support	2(2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2(2.5)
Budget, Infrastructure, M. Support	2(2.5)	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	2(2.5)
Budget & Infrastructure	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6(7.5)	6(7.5)
Budget, Infrastructure & Skills	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6(7.5)	6(7.5)
Budget, Resist Charge, Infrastructure & Skill	0 (0.0)	0 (0.0)	6(7.5)	6(7.5)

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

From Table 7, it can be shown that, out of 80 respondents of questions, at AMA, 13.75% said budget constraint, 6.5% resistance to change, 1.25% lack of infrastructure, 1.25% lack of skills of records staff, 2.5% lack of management support, 5% budget, resistance to change and management support, 1.25% budget, change, infrastructure, 2.5% budget, change, skills of records, management support and 2.5% budget, resistance, infrastructure, records staff and management support are the challenges the assembly faces in managing records. However, From respondents of KMA, 8.75% said budget constraint 11.25% lack of skills of records staff, 11.25% budget constraints, resistance to change, lack of infrastructure, lack of skills of records staff and management support are the challenges the assembly faces in managing records and respondents from TMA 2.5% responded, lack of infrastructure, 6.25% responded budget, resistance, infrastructure, records staff and management support, 7.5% budget, infrastructure & skills, and

7.5% budget, resist charge, infrastructure & skill. This shows that all the Assemblies have challenges in all the factors as illustrated in Table 7.

Adams (2006) that there is still a mounting challenge to defeat for the effective formulation and implementation of the right to information law and this study shows that there are challenges the assembly faces in managing records. The study disclosed several challenges confronting the district assembly with regards to records management and its associated policies.

In the study, 90% of all levels of staff admit that there are challenges of records management in the assembly. According to the research, district assemblies have been troubled by records management problems such as budget constraints, resistance to change, lack of infrastructure, lack of skills of records staff, and lack of management support. These challenges were distributed across various district assemblies. However, some of the challenges were more essential than others, such as budget constraints and a lack of records staff skills, which were identified as the majority of the challenges. Moreover, some of the challenges were more severe than others. These included (3.75%) budget constraints and (11.25%) lack of skills of records staff, which were identified to be the majority among the challenges. This is consistent with the literature, which suggests that in order for records management systems to improve decision-making, factors such as budget constraints, resistance to change, lack of infrastructure, lack of skills of records staff, and lack of management support need to be thoroughly handled (Ge & Helfert, 2006).

## **The Right to Information Act in the District Assemblies**

### ***Awareness of the Freedom of Information Act***

The respondents were asked to indicate whether they are aware of the Freedom of Information

Act recently passed by Parliament? The results are presented in Table 8 below:

### **Table 8: Awareness of the Freedom of Information Act**

Are you aware of the Freedom of Information Act recently passed by Parliament?	Number (Percent)			
	AMA	KMA	TMA	Total
Yes	16(20)	18(22.5)	13(16.25)	47(58.75)
No	14(17.5)	7(8.75)	12(15)	33(41.25)

**Source: Field Data, 2023**

From Table 8, it is shown that out of the 80 respondents of whether they are aware of the Freedom of Information Act recently passed by Parliament? 16 (20%) responded Yes and 14 (17.5%) responded No from AMA while 18 (22.5%) responded Yes and 7 (8.75%) responded No from KMA and 13 (16.25%) responded Yes and 12 (15%) from TMA responded No. This shows that out of 80 respondents 47(58.75) are informed that of the Freedom of Information Act.

***Preparations being made the Metropolitan Assemblies towards RTI Act implementation***

The respondents were asked to indicate whether there are any preparations being made in the Metropolitan Assemblies towards the implementation of the Right to Information. The results are presented in Table 9 that indicates that out of the 80 respondents, 16 (20%) responded No to preparations being made in the Assembly and 14 (17.5%) responded Yes from AMA whilst 18 (22.5%) responded No, and 7 (8.75%) responded Yes from KMA and 8 (10%) responded No and 17 (21.25%) from TMA responded Yes that the records are not restricted. This shows that out of 80 respondents 42 (52.5%) have not made any preparations by the Assembly towards the implementation of the Right to Information Act.

The effectiveness of the right to information would largely depend on the manner and extent to which the governments are willing to provide the information to the public. Enacting records management policies and drafting manuals, educating registry workers, developing and implementing a disaster management program, environmental control and monitoring, and appraisal and disposition programs were some of the financial records management

operations. The findings support Lyaruu's (2005; Ngulube and Tafor's) findings (2006). Even though there is an existing right to information legislation, but the information will remain distant and elusive owing to the lack of government programs and strategies on how to transfer, devolve, delegate, disperse and deconcentrate the vital information it possesses on the citizenry, if it is never really felt by the citizenry because then the law will remain toothless.

## **CONCLUSION**

The goal of the study is to determine whether the metropolitan assemblies have established policies and written records management guidelines in the face of the implementation of the Right to Information Act. The majority of the employees are conversant with the assembly's legal framework for records management. It was revealed that the metropolitan assemblies have faced records management challenges such as budget restrictions, opposition to change, a lack of infrastructure, a shortage of records workers with the necessary skills, and a lack of management support. The study revealed that majority of the respondents are aware of the Freedom of Information Act but this majority indicated the lack of preparedness at the Assembly towards the implementation of the Right to Information.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are therefore made based on the findings:

- 1. Funding:** The need to improve revenue and budget for records management has been a concern of policymakers and practitioners on the need to provide quality services to the people. For these reasons, local governments make effort to understand the priorities of the local people to allocate funds for developmental projects that would be of greatest benefit to the locality.
- 2. Record Management infrastructure:** Infrastructure for records management allows the public office to make and manage complete and accurate records with maximum efficiency and effectiveness. As a result, it is suggested that purpose-designed records centers be developed and suitably equipped for the storage and management of records.
- 3. Need for education on the Right to Information Act:** There is a need for education for both public officials and the general public on their respective responsibilities and rights under the Act. The district assemblies bear a significant amount of this responsibility to encourage

citizens to use their right to obtain information.

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