Chapter 11
Information Disaster Management:
Preserving Information for Sustainable Development in Public Institutions in Ghana

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ABSTRACT

Information is one of the most valuable resources and important assets in organisations globally. Industry 5.0 has brought about a more human-centric and sustainable approach to organizations in their work output. Organizations achieve competitive advantage and make informed decisions based on the information acquired and how well such information resources are well managed. Information management helps organisations to manage their information accurately, cost-effectively, timely, accessibly, and usably. Conversely, the risks of disaster remain a peril to the management of information in public institutions. The study seeks to examine the disaster management procedures adopted by public institutions to safeguard valuable information for informed decisions, workable policies, economic growth, and sustainable development in Ghana.

INTRODUCTION

Information is an indispensable resource which exists in every organizational enterprise worldwide. It is needed daily to solve problems and make decisions affecting the future of businesses and institutions. Information is a competitive intelligence that is a strategic asset to institutions (Robek et al, 2002), thus, institutions' and businesses' achievements in organizations are largely dependent on the information they possess and how well they manage their information resources. Furthermore, information is "any intelligence which can be communicated in either graphic form or by alphanumeric characters". Information has different characteristics depending predominantly on the form, usage, and value. Thus, the value of information depends on how it is efficiently used and readily accessible to individuals who need it. Information covers the entire sphere of records, documents and files created and maintained by organizations.

Organizations' records are recorded information regardless of medium or characteristics. They include information which resides on microfilm, electronic and other media in addition to paper documents. Records according to ISO 15489 (2001) is information in any format, created, received, and maintained as evidence and information by an organization or person, in pursuance of legal obligations or the transaction of business. Records are created in the first instance for the conduct of business and to support accountability. Organizations may also use them for cultural purposes, both for research and to promote awareness and understanding of corporate history (Shepherd and Yeo, 2003). Outside the organization, the wider community also has expectations that records should be kept. Therefore, when records are used for planning, decision-making and purposes of accountability, they are not merely supporting organizational needs for compliance or self-defence; they also meet the requirements of society for transparency and the protection of rights. The management and control of records and documents in organizations are extremely important issues to businesses and governments to enhance decision making to facilitate growth and development globally in the era of technological advancement.

BACKGROUND

The risks of disasters present dangers to the safety and preservation of official records and information. A disaster is "a major emergency; a convergence of circumstances that usually leaves an organization unable to fulfil its mission, sometimes for an extended period" (Bolger 2003). Disasters cause disruption to organizations' operations and activities. There are many kinds of disasters and one of such is information disaster. Information disaster is generally, any happening that results in the destruction of "information resources". Information resources are data and information assets of an organization. They also include facilities and infrastructure that contain data, information, and records. Information disasters are any incident that results in the denial of access to information and its timing is unexpected and the effects are seriously disruptive resulting in the sudden removal of records and documents from accessibility and use, threatening human safety and/or damaging information resources including buildings, collections, contents, facilities, or services.

Disasters have been seen in recent times as the consequences of risks and these risks are the products of hazards and vulnerability. Hazards can include hidden conditions that may present future threats, and which may have different origins whilst vulnerability is a set of prevailing or consequential conditions resulting from physical, social, economical, and environmental factors which increase the susceptibility

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