

## Nigeria's Freedom of Information Act 2011, its Usage among Journalists in Katsina State

**Ibrahim Abdulkadir**

*Department of Mass Communication, Bayero University, Kano*

### Abstract

*The aim of this study is to review the provisions of the freedom of information Act 2011, and investigate its usage among journalists in Katsina state. The study strives to find out whether journalists in Katsina state are aware of the Act, to assess provisions of the Act that give access to public information and find out whether journalists in Katsina state use the Act. In order to achieve these, the study used quantitative method whereby a survey was carried out using questionnaire as its tool of data gathering. The study was guided by the Social Responsibility theory as its theoretical framework. Findings indicate that the freedom of information Act contains more sections which deny access to public information than those that give access, and that journalists in Katsina State are aware of the Act. The study argues that ignorance on the part of some journalists and bureaucracy on the part of managers of public information are factors affecting the workability of the Act in Katsina State. The study recommends that all sections of the Act which deny access to information should be amended, stakeholders, governments at all levels, media owners and managers should organise workshops and seminars for journalists and the general public to enlighten them on the provisions of the Act and on how to use the Act. The media at all times should be allowed to publish or broadcast what it professionally deems fit for public consumption, without prior censorship. The Nigeria union of journalists and other media unions should make it mandatory that all registered journalists must buy a copy of the freedom of information Act. The study hopes to serve as a reference to all journalists in Katsina State in offering useful tips on the provisions and effective usage of the Act, and thus make little contribution to improving the practice of investigative journalism in Katsina State.*

### Keywords

Act 2011, Freedom, Information, Journalists, Katsina State and Nigeria



### I. Introduction

The idea of freedom of information in the universal context is never traced to the provision of any country's constitution the world over (Egbon, 2001, p.4). However, motivations for having freedom of information have been as varied as the circumstances of each country that has sought it. Often, the momentum towards openness has arisen from scandals, such as corruption and graft endemic to local government in India, Watergate and secret surveillance in the United States, official 'entertainment' expenses and HIV contamination of blood supply in Japan, food poisoning in Ireland (Blanton, 2002). Blanton is also of the view that environmentalist, Human Right advocates and anti-corruption crusaders have also been in the fore-front in almost every country that has taken the freedom of information road (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022).

Rarely has the initiative come from the government, although the power tussle within governments usually makes a crucial difference, as when a congress seeks to restrain executive power, or a reform-oriented executive tries to limit the permanent bureaucracy, or

an ombudsperson exercises particular independence and authority (Blanton, 2002). Whatever the motivations, however, a spectre has been haunting bureaucracies around the world, forcing them to ease access to the wealth of data they have stashed away in cabinets and drawers, vaults and safes.

The first freedom of information law in the world actually predates both the American and French revolutions. In 1766, Sweden passed the freedom of Press Act, which legalised the publication of government documents and provided for public access to them. Sweden enjoyed an extended period of parliamentary rule from 1718 to 1772, and the new majority party in 1776 wanted to see the documents that the previous government had kept secret. Today, these rights are built into the Swedish constitution as well as various statutes, and the level of routine openness in Swedish government is probably the highest in the world (Gustaf, 1987, pp.35-54).

Two hundred years after Sweden, the United States passed its freedom of information Act, and for very similar reasons. The US FOI Act which has broad coverage and narrow exemptions and powerful court review of government decisions to withhold information, is actually an amended version of the 1966 Act, passed in 1974 by the democratic congress over the veto by the Republican president Gerald Ford (Herbert 1999, p.69). American's constitution is one of the clearest embodiments of the concept of freedom. Egbon (2001, p.4) expressed this view more vividly, thus: "What made the United States of America to be the most dynamic country and became the foremost super power in the world is the adequate freedom of expression been given and exercised."

Most strikingly, in the past two decades, countries like Japan, Bulgaria, Ireland, South Africa, Thailand, Britain, Finland, Australia, New Zealand, Israel, etc. enacted formal status guaranteeing their citizens right to access government information (Msughter & Pate, 2021). Today, about 45 countries boast formal laws guaranteeing the right to information. And although complete implementation is a reality in only a few, the response from the public has been overwhelming. The total request filed with the US government exceeded 2million in 2001. In the week immediately after 2 April, 2001 when Japan began to implement her freedom of information law, citizens filed more than 4000 requests (Blanton, 2002). Today the freedom of information Act (FOIA) in the US has become a model for reformers and ranks as the most heavily used access law in the world. In 1999, 1,965,919 requests were filed by citizens, corporations, and foreigners (Blanton, 2002, p.4).

On the African continent, the conditions that have made access rights both important and hard to implement in the global south generally, are found in their most extreme forms. This research, therefore, does not consist of a series of stories in which virtue triumphs over oppression. On the contrary, the fragility of post-colonial and post-settler state formations in Africa, the linguistic, cultural and ethnic diversity within particular countries, widespread violent conflict, the absence of adequate economic and social infrastructure, and the near-universal replacement of politics-as policy- making by the politics of patronage under the aegis of the Bretons Woods institutions and the *World Trade Organization*, all mean that demand-driven state compliance with the requirements of transparency and freedom of information is rarely seen.

More specifically, as far as freedom of information is concerned, good record-keeping and archival practices – an essential pre-condition for compliance – are often lacking, and bureaucracies themselves are disorganised and poorly trained. In many African countries the

post-colonial languages of administration – English, French, Portuguese, and Arabic – may make such documents as are available incomprehensible to the majority of the population.

By themselves, these explanatory factors are necessary but insufficient, particularly as they lead all too easily to the conclusion that it is the backwardness of the political and judicial systems in African countries, and perhaps even inadequacies in actual African people, that have prevented this ‘essential right for every person from attaining universal recognition on the continent. But it is also legitimate to ask what it might be about the universalised paradigm of freedom of information that is an obstacle to its own success. The number of African countries where battle has been successfully joined between civil society alliances and the legislatures over the need to pass freedom of information laws is tiny, with only a handful of the 53 countries on the continent having enabling laws actually in place. The ‘veritable wave’ that has been ‘sweeping the globe’ has passed the African continent almost completely by, for reasons that merit examination.

In Nigeria, the long-awaited freedom of information Bill has gained approval by the National Assembly and assented to by President Goodluck Jonathan on 28<sup>th</sup> May, 2011 and thus becomes a law. The concern of this research is, how perfect is the 2011 freedom of information Act, and how the journalists have been able to utilize the Act effectively? Though, the Act is to make public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, project public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy. It also protects serving public officers from adverse consequences for disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization, and establishes procedures for the achievement of those purposes and related purposes thereof. The freedom of information Act made it clear on how information records can be obtained, such as rights to access records, application for access to records due to refusal by head of government to public institutions to disclose records. The Act further spelled out ways of getting access to records by courts, materials exempted and documents under security classification.

After the signing into law, of the freedom of information bill by President Goodluck Jonathan, many Nigerians were quick to observe that the document comes with so many deficiencies (Ogbuokiri, 2011). However, considering the length of time and the rigours that brought the Act to life, stakeholders were prepared to take the Act like that. However, a professional body; the Public Administration and Management Development Institute (PAMDI) took the lead in dissecting the document and analysing how it can be implemented successfully. PAMDI organised a national conference in Abuja with the theme; “Freedom of Information Act 2011 and the fight against corruption and corporate fraud in governance”, in using the FOIA as a point of reference (Ogbuokiri, 2011).

The conference did an overview of the Act, analysed its prospect and challenges as well as the long drawn battle towards its realization from 1999 till it was finally signed into law on 2 June, 2011. It observed that the Act contains more exemption sections and clauses than sections that grant access to information. Alerting that, some mischievous public officers can use these sections for unjust and mischievous purposes. For instance, only sections 1 and 3 grant access to information but ten sections (7,11,12,14,15,16,17,18,19 and 26) are meant to deny the public access to information (Ogbuokiri, 2011, p.1).

However, the omnibus proviso against denial of information that says; “where the interest of the public would be better served by having such records being made available, this exemption to disclosure shall not apply”, was commended, with the expectation that the judiciary would interpret the proviso liberally for the public good. The impact of the Act will not rest with the civil society groups alone. The public is entitled to the truth, and only correct information can form the basis for sound journalism and ensure the confidence of the people.

With the FOIA the press is now better equipped to hold public officers accountable to the people and for the job they do. As the fourth estate of the realm, the effect on journalism will undoubtedly have a spiral effect on the entire society for the benefit of all. This research therefore attempts to study the provisions of the freedom of information Act by carrying out a documentary analysis with the aim of reviewing its provisions and determining its use among journalists in Katsina state.

### **Objectives of the Study**

The aim of this study is to assess the Nigeria's freedom of information Act 2011, it seeks to:

1. Find out whether journalists in Katsina are aware of the Act.
2. Find out the provisions of the Act that give access to public information.

## **II. Review of Literatures**

### **2.1 Conceptualising Freedom of Information**

Freedom of information is an essential ingredient of the democratic culture, the higher the degree allowed in any country, the greater the degree of democracy its citizens enjoy. We shall examine the meaning of freedom of information given by various authors. Momoh (2010, p. 81) is of the view that, "Freedom of information has to do with access to information. It is more; it is access of the press and public to information held by public bodies". The argument cannot be denied that all information which government and its institutions hold is public and should only be held in the interest of the public, not as it has been, in the interest of the government and its institutions. This could also be seen as; "rights of a citizen to be informed in writing if a governmental agency holds certain information and requests its disclosure. If refused, he or she can demand to be given the cause of refusal in written".

Freedom of information, specifically access to information held by public authorities is a fundamental element of the right to freedom of expression and vital to the proper functioning of a democracy. It is an act that makes provision for the disclosure of information held by public authorities or by persons providing services for them (Robert, 2000). This means that the act enables one sees a wide range of public information because it gives the right to ask any public body for all the information they have on any subject (Yar'Adua et al., 2023). This Act makes public records and information more freely available, provide for public access to public records and information, protect public records and information to the extent consistent with the public interest and the protection of personal privacy, protect serving public officers from adverse consequences for disclosing certain kinds of official information without authorization and establish procedures for the achievement of those purposes and; for related matters.

In a country where Freedom of Information Act is in operation, anyone can make a request for information— there are no restrictions on your age, nationality, or where you live. You can ask for any information at all, but some information might be withheld to protect various interests which are allowed for by the Act. If this is the case, the public authority must tell you why they have withheld such information. According to Bard (2001), unless there's a good reason, the organization must provide the information within seven (7) working days. In a democratic world, the public is expected to have access to information (particularly through the media) not only on how they are governed but also on anything that is of interest to the individual or group (Yar'Adua et al., 2023). This is what the Act is all about. Until recently, the right to freedom of information in Nigeria has been overlooked.

While many established democracies across the world have enacted freedom of information regime, Nigeria had (before now) regarded freedom of information as a luxury only practicable in the Western World and other established democracies (Ekunno 2001).

Ekunno further asserts that a culture of secrecy had become entrenched in Nigerian government and members of the public including the media are always denied access to official information, which in a democracy, they should be entitled to. This breakdown in the flow of information impairs the democratic process and slows economic and social development as citizens are unable to participate effectively in the process of government, make informed choices about who should govern them and to properly scrutinize officials to ensure corruption is avoided (Aondover et al., 2022). Government officials themselves also fail to benefit from public input which could ease their decision making or improve their decision. Also, without accurate information on matters of public interest, citizens must rely on rumours and unconfirmed reports with the obvious danger this presents for accurate and objective reporting by the media.

Freedom of information in a broader perspective as posited by Andrew (2005, p.128) 'is an extension of freedom of speech, a fundamental Human Right recognised in international law, which is today understood more generally as freedom of expression in any medium, be it orally, in written, print, through the internet or through Art forms'. This means that the protection of freedom of speech as a right includes not only the content, but also the means of expression. Freedom of information may also refer to the right to privacy in the context of the internet and information technology. As with the right to freedom of expression, the right to privacy is a recognised Human Right and Freedom of information Act as an extension of this Act (Free net-online computing, IEEE.). Freedom of information also includes opposition to patents, copyrights, or intellectual property in general (Onyejelem et al., 2024). Considering the foregoing definitions, freedom of information could summarily be said to mean; freedom to seek, access and receive public information kept secret by the government and its agencies from the general public.

Freedom of information must be backed by an Act of parliament. This Act therefore, provides for the disclosure of information held by administrative agencies to the public, unless the document requested fall into one of the specific exemptions set forth in the status. The law is regarded as a great milestone because it guarantees the right of people to learn about the internal workings of government. The world summit on the information society (WSIS) Declaration of principles adopted in 2003 reaffirms democracy and the universality, indivisibility and interdependence of all Human Rights and fundamental freedoms. The Declaration makes specific reference to the importance of the right to freedom of expression for the "information society",

Kleng, Mathias, Murray and Andrew (2005) express this more vividly, thus:

We reaffirm, as an essential foundation of the information society, and as outlined in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Right (UDHR), that, everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; that this right includes freedom to hold opinion without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Communication is a fundamental social process. Everyone everywhere should have the opportunity to participate and no one should be excluded from the benefits the information society offers.

## **2.2 Historical Perspective on Freedom of Information**

Freedom of information has a long history, the issue of a free press is never fully resolved, and will continue in varying patterns as its defenders, its reformers and its



detractors exercise their own rights to speak and write freely, but the government having the right and resources of the state wants to put the press under check (Okoye, 2007). The first freedom of information law in the world actually predates both the American and French revolutions. In 1766, Sweden passed the freedom of the press Act, which legalised the publication of government documents and provided for public access to them. Sweden enjoyed an extended period of parliamentary rule from 1718 to 1772, and the new majority party in 1776 wanted to see the documents that the previous government had kept secret. Today, these rights are built into the Swedish constitution as well as various statutes, and the level of routine openness in Swedish government is probably the highest in the world.

Two hundred years after Sweden, the United States passed its freedom of information Act, and for very similar reasons. The US Act we know today, with broad coverage and narrow exemptions and powerful court review of government decisions to withhold information, is actually an amended version of the 1966 Act, passed in 1974 by the democratic congress over the veto by the Republican president Gerald Ford (Herbert, 1999, pp.1-69). American's constitution is one of the clearest embodiments of the concept of freedom. Egbon (2001, p.4) expressed this view more vividly, thus: "What made the United States of America to be the most dynamic country and became the foremost super power in the world is the adequate freedom of expression been given and exercised".

Most strikingly, in the past two decades, countries like Japan, Bulgaria, Ireland, South Africa, Thailand, Britain, Finland, Australia, Newzealand, Israel etc., enacted formal status guaranteeing their citizens right to access government information. Today, about 45 countries boast formal laws guaranteeing the right to information (Mojaye & Aondover, 2022). And although complete implementation is a reality in only a few, the response from the public has been overwhelming. The total request filed with the US government exceeded 2million in 2001. In the week immediately after 2 April, 2001 when Japan began to implement its FOI law, citizens filed more than 4000 requests (Blanton, 2002). Today the FOIA in the US has become a model for reformers and ranks as the most heavily used access law in the world. In 1999, 1,965,919 requests were filed by citizens, corporations, and foreigners (Blanton, 2002, p.4).

According to UNESCO, in 1990, only 13 countries had adopted national right to information laws whereas today, there are 70 of such laws adopted across the world with a further 20 – 30 of them under consideration in other countries (Momoh, 2010, p.81). There is more to passing freedom of information laws to establish openness across to information. The implementation of the laws relies on factors like the surrounding constitutional laws, the availability of resources for its implementation, how dynamic the citizens are reflected in the activities of NGOs, trade unions, professional bodies and a vibrant and focused press. As of 2006, 19 countries had freedom of information legislation that extended to government bodies and private bodies, nearly half of which had been enacted in the past ten years. Such legislation was pending in a further 50 countries (Mazhar, 2010).

In many countries, there are constitutional guarantees for the right of access to information, but usually these are unused if specific legislation to support them does not exist. The openness is reflected in the content of the legislation. Every government, ministry or department is required to document its activities, programmes and plans and update them regularly (Momoh 2010, pp.82-83). There are still no go areas in freedom of information legislation. They include national security, records of individuals, materials for prosecution of offenders and trade secrets. Many are the laws that regulate access to information (Momoh 2010, p.83).

In Nigeria, access to information has been regulated by various laws, the most restrictive being the official secrets Act which makes it mandatory that unless an authorised

officer approves such information to be released, it cannot be given out without the releasing officer being penalised (Momoh 2010, p.84). Even being in possession of information classified is punishable by imprisonment of up to 14 years. But it is not as if the freedom of information Bill is opening everything government is doing to public access (Oreoluwa et al., 2024). No, what cannot be protected any longer by whatever law we have in the books today is any Act that violates the laws of the land that involves the mismanagement and gross waste of funds, fraud, and abuse of authority. If there is money laundering, which would in the past be classified information and punishable on disclosure without authorization, such information can be given and disseminated without penalizing the officer who gave it or the person who received it. Protection is still given to a whole load of material listed in section 14-21 of the Act.

### **2.3 Theoretical Framework**

This study adopted The Social Responsibility Theory. Robert Hutchins (the head of Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press) once said that “Freedom requires responsibility” (Marzolf, 1991). If the Press would be free to publish anything, it behooves on them to be willing to accept responsibility for whatever is published. This study focuses on freedom of information Act and agrees that freedom has a great responsibility behind it. In such a case, the best theory that would be appropriate is Social Responsibility Theory. The theory is an off-shot of Libertarian Theory and was propounded by Siebert Peterson and Schramm in 1963. Historically, Social Responsibility Theory owes its origin to the Hutchins Commission on Freedom of the Press, set up in the United States of America in 1947 to re-examine the concept of Press Freedom. The Commission worked hard at developing what has become known as the Social Responsibility Theory.

This theory, according to Christian (2004), reflected a dissatisfaction with media, owners and operators and the way they distributed media while also accepting the following principles: the press should service the political system, enlighten the public, safeguard the liberties of the individual, service the economic system, entertain the public (provided that the entertainment is “good”), and maintain its own financial self-sufficiency. The Commission saw the Social Responsibility Theory as being a “safeguard against totalitarianism.” Hutchins’ main goal was to make the owners of the press responsible and still maintain freedom of the press.

In this same light, Siebert, Peterson and Schramm (1956), warn:

...the power and near monopoly position of the media impose on them an obligation to be socially responsible, to see that all sides are fairly presented and that the public has enough information to decide; and that if the media do not take on themselves such responsibility it may be necessary for some other agency of the public to enforce it; freedom of expression under the social responsibility theory is not an absolute right, as under pure libertarian theory. One’s right to free expression must be balanced against the private rights of others and against vital social interests.

This theory is relevant to the work because it focuses on the media to be careful while exercising their freedom. The Nigerian media need to know the assumptions of the Social Responsibility Media Theory before jumping to make use of the Freedom of Information Act. McQuail cited in Anaeto, Onabanjo, Osifeso (2008) gives the assumptions of the theory as follows:

- a) That media should accept and fulfil certain obligations to society.
- b) That, through professional standards of informativeness, truth, accuracy, objectivity and balance, these obligations can be met.

- c) That media should regulate itself within the framework of law and established institutions to be able to carry out its responsibilities.
- d) That whatever might lead to crime, violence, civil disorder, or offence to minority groups, should be avoided by the media.
- e) That the media should reflect its society's plurality, giving access to various points of view and granting all the right to reply.
- f) Based on the principle in (1), the society has the right to expect high standards of performance from the media. Intervention can only be justified to secure public good.
- g) Accountability of media professionals should be to the society, employers and the market.

With the above principles, it is glaring that the "Freedom" carries obligations, and the Nigerian press, which now enjoy a privileged position under the new Freedom of Information Act, is obliged to be responsible to Nigerians in carrying out certain essential functions of Mass Communication (Vitalis et al., 2025). For example, it would not be socially responsible for any Nigerian media (despite the presence of (FIA) to have reported how on 25th December 2009, Umar Farouk AbdulMuttalib, used some methods, evaded security measures and smuggled a bomb in his underpants into an American airline en route Amsterdam to Detroit nor report the act of rape that happened between Mannir Goma and an old woman in Katsina State last year October. The media while exercising their fundamental human right must put the public interest and the national security at heart. This is part of the onus of Social Responsibility Theory.

The right to freedom of information is an important aspect of the universal guarantee of freedom of information which includes the right to seek and to receive as well as to impart information (Aondover et al., 2025). The right is proclaimed in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and protected in international human rights treaties, including the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (ICCPR) and the African Charter on Human Rights. According to Ruth (2000), Article 19 of the ICCPR is in the following terms: Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression: this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally in writing or in defeat, inform of arts or through any other of his choice. In recent years, the UN special Rapporteur on freedom of opinion and expression has regularly spread the overriding importance of freedom of information. For example in his 1995 reports to the commission on human rights, he stated: Freedom will be bereft of all effectiveness if the people have no access to information (Aondover et al., 2022). Access to information is basic to the democratic way of life. The tendency to withhold information from the people at large is therefore to be strongly checked (Ruth 2000).

The social Responsibility theory according to McQuail (1987) cited in Ojobor (2002) gives the main strength of the theory as follows: It avoids the conflict situation during war or emergency by accepting the public opinion. Media will not play monopoly because the audience and media scholars will rise questions if media published or broadcast anything wrongly or manipulate any story. Media Standards will improve. Media will concern all class audience rather than focus on higher classes in the society. Media may work autonomously but certain thing is controlled by the government and other public organisation. Employing the social responsibility theory in this work becomes relevant due to its stance that, freedom carries concomitant obligations, and the press, which enjoys a privilege position under the government, is obliged to be responsible to the society for carrying certain essential functions of mass communication (Maikaba & Msughter, 2019).



### III. Research Methods

The study makes use of survey using structured questionnaire on media practitioners and journalists in Katsina state, to obtain information related to the subject matter. A questionnaire is a research instrument consisting of series of questions and other prompts for the purpose of gathering information from the respondents. For the population, this study focuses on the 420 practicing journalists in Katsina state. A total number of 84 copies of questionnaire were distributed among journalists in Katsina. 80 copies of questionnaire were completed and retrieved. These journalists operate under; Africa Independent Television (AIT), Raypower FM, Radio Nigeria Companion FM, NTA, Katsina state Television (KTTV), Radio Katsina, Ministry of Information Katsina and the correspondent Chapel. This area is selected for the purpose of relevance in view of the topic under study; the research therefore, adopts the simple random sampling technique which is a form of probability sampling to select the respondents. Simple tables, frequency and percentages was used to analysed the data.

### IV. Result and Discussion

This was done through tabulation of the data on frequency distribution and percentages complemented by the documentary analysis. A total number of 84 copies of questionnaire were distributed among journalists in Katsina. 80 copies of questionnaire were completed and retrieved, while 4 copies of the questionnaire could not be retrieved.

**Table 1.** Copies of questionnaire retrieved

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Retrieved	80	95
Withheld	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>84</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 1 above, shows clearly that out of the 84 copies of questionnaire distributed to respondents, 80 were retrieved which accounts for 95% of the total number of questionnaire distributed. 4 copies could not be retrieved which amounts to only 5%. The study will therefore use the 80 retrieved copies for its analysis.

**Table 2.** Gender of the respondents

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Male	60	75
Female	20	25
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 2 shows that 60 of the respondents that is 75% are male, while 20 of them which is 25% are female. This shows that majority of the respondents are male.

**Table 3.** Age distribution of respondents

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
15-25	23	28.75
26-35	35	43.75
46 and Above	22	27.5

<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>
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The table shows that majority of the respondents are between the ages of 26 and 35, that accounts for 43.75%. 28.75% are between the age bracket of 15 and 25, while 27.5% 46 years and above. This distribution clearly shows that majority of the respondents are in their youthful and resourceful age.

**Table 4. Marital status of respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Married	50	62.5
Single	25	31.25
Divorced	3	3.75
Widow	2	2.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The table above shows that 50 of the respondents which accounts for 62.5% are married, 25 which is 31.25% are single, 3(3.75%) are divorced and 2 which is 2.5% are widows. From the total number of respondents that are married only 5 of them are female, 45 of them are male. The two widows are female.

**Table 5. Occupation of respondents**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Journalism	80	100
Others	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 5 shows clearly that all the 80 respondents are journalists this is because the research focuses only on journalists in Katsina state.

**Table 6. Medium where the respondents work**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Television	32	40
Radio	39	48
Newspaper	6	8
Ministry of Information	3	4
Freelance	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

The above table shows the distribution of the medium where the respondents work, the table shows that majority of the respondents work with the radio, this accounts for 39 respondents which is 48%. On television, 32 respondents (40%) are recorded. The print media (newspaper) has 6 respondents (8%). None of the respondent is a freelance and those in the correspondent chapel did not attempt the question.

**Table 7.** Highest Qualification of respondents

<b>Variables</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
SSCE	5	6
ND/NCE	20	25
HND	13	16
Degree	38	48
Post Degree	4	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

From the table above, 5 out of the total respondents, equivalent to 6% have secondary school living certificates as their highest qualification. Also 20 out of the respondents, 25% have National Diploma or NCE as their highest qualification. Similarly, 13 respondents (16%) have HND and as their highest qualification. The table also shows that 38 respondents (48%) are graduates with degree as their highest academic qualification, and another 40 (15.2%) with post-degree qualification. Those with post degree qualifications are 4 (5%). The study therefore was across the entire qualification cadre and this might have impacted the study to be answered as appropriate as possible

**Table 8.** Awareness of Information Act among respondents

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	68	85
No	12	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 8 above shows the number of the respondents who are aware of the Freedom of information Act, 2011. The table shows that 68 respondents equivalent to (85%) are aware of the FOI Act 2011. This might be due to the fact that most of the respondents are journalists and are not newly enrolled staff in journalism profession. The study could be relevant considering these huge “yes” responses. Those who answered NO are 12 in numbers (15%). These 12 might possibly not have had a glance at a copy of the Act or may even not have heard of the Act.

**Table 9.** Showing whether respondents have read the Act or not

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
Yes	34	42.5
No	30	37.5
Still Reading	16	20
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

This table shows that out of the 68 respondents who are aware of the existence of the Act, only 34 which is 42.5% have read the Act, 16 respondents (20%) are currently reading the Act, while 30 respondents which accounts for 37.5% have not opened the Act to read at all. Considering the previous table 8, where 12 respondents are not aware of the Act, it means out of the 30 who did not read the Act, 18 of them fall into the category of those who are aware of the Act, while 12 respondents from the 30 did not read because they are not aware of the Act.

**Table 10.** Showing whether the Act Provides access to public Information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	38	47.5
No	30	37.5
No response	12	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 10 above points out respondents understanding on whether the Act provides access to public information or not. From the table above 38 respondents which constitute 47.5% of the total respondents agree that the Act facilitates access to public information, still on the table, 30 respondents (37.5%) say the Act does not provide access to public information, 12 respondents (15%) did not respond to the question, possibly because they are not aware of the Act.

**Table 11.** Showing whether the Act contains provisions that hinder access to public Information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	40	50
No	30	37.5
No response	10	12.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 11 shows that 40 respondents (50%) maintain that the Act has provisions that hinder access to public information. On the contrary 30 respondents (37.5%) say that the Act has no provision hindering public information. 10 respondents (12.5%) did not respond to the question. The table clearly shows that even among those who did not read the Act or those who are still reading it admit that there are provisions of the Act which hinder access to public information.

**Table 12.** Showing whether respondents ever applied for Access of information to any organisation

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	20	25
No	60	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Some Journalists have earlier on applied for access to any public document or information and those who have not made any attempt at all. Majority of the respondents, about 60 which accounts for 75% have never applied for access to any public information, while only 20 (25%) has applied to access certain public documents or information.

**Table 13.** Responses of the organisations that respondents applied to.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Granted	2	2.5

Not Granted	3	3.75
Bureaucracy	15	18.75
No response	60	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

From table 13 above, out of the 20 respondents who applied for access of information as earlier shown on table 12, only 2 respondents were granted the information they applied for, this accounts for only 2.5% of the total sampled population. 3 respondents (3.5%) were denied access, while 15 of the respondents (17%) are delayed and given various excuses. From the table, majority of the organisations, about 60 (75%) did not respond to the request.

**Table 14.** Why some respondents did not apply for information to any organisation.

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
No reason	20	25
Fear of Refusal	18	18.5
Ignorance	12	15
In ability to read the Act	30	37.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 14 shows reasons why majority of the journalists in Katsina did not apply for access to public information. 20 respondents (25%) gave no reason, 18 respondents (22.5%) did not apply for fear of denial, 12 respondents (15%) maintain that they are not aware of the Act. 30 respondents equally maintain that they have not read the Act, therefore could not apply for access. This distribution is also represented on the above bar chart.

**Table 15.** Number of Parastatals or organizations which respondents applied to for information

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
One parastatal	5	6.25
More than one	15	18.75
No response	60	75
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 15 shows that 5 respondents which is 6.5% applied for information to only one parastatal, 15 respondents which accounts for 18.5% applied for information to more than one organisations, Majority of the respondents totalling 60 (75%) did not respond to the question, either because of the reasons given in table 14 or some other reasons not specified.

**Table 16.** Respondents opinion on the workability of the Act in Katsina

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Yes	26	33
No	14	17
No Response	40	50
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 16 shows respondents opinions as to whether the Act will work in Katsina or not. From the table 26 respondents which accounts for 33% say the Act will work in Katsina, 14 respondents (17%) say the Act cannot work in Katsina. Half of the respondents, 40 which

account for 50% of the total respondents did not respond to the question. The distribution is equally represented on the bar chart.

**Table 17.** The extent to which the Act can work In Katsina

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Very well	2	2.5
Well	3	3.5
Fairly	21	26
No Response	54	68
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 17 presents responses of journalists in Katsina on the extent to which the Act can work in Katsina state. The table shows that 2 respondents (2.5%) say it will work very well, 3 respondents (3.5%) say it will work well, 21 respondents (26%) say the Act will fairly work in Katsina, and 54 respondents did not respond to the question. This large number may constitute those who are not aware of the Act and part of those who have not read the Act and possibly part of those who are still reading the Act.

**Table 18.** Why the Act cannot work In Katsina

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Bureaucracy	14	17.5
Ignorance	42	52.5
No Response	24	30
<b>Total</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>100</b>

Table 18 shows reasons why majority of the respondents admit that the Act cannot work in Katsina state. On the table 14 respondents (17.5%) attribute their position to the bureaucratic nature of government agencies evident in the case involving journalists in Katsina that took place in August 2011 where Katsina state government carried out recruitment of teachers through its board; the Katsina state Teachers' Service board. The exercise was suspended after a wide allegation of malpractice involving top officers of the Board. Some Journalists like Hussein Audu of Companion FM, Mustapha Inuwa of KTTV and a reporter from the Nation Newspaper approached the Chairman of the Board with an application signed by all demanding a document from the state government communicating the suspension the exercise. The chairman declined after several efforts by these journalists with the excuse of not getting the directive from the commissioner for education.

Another case was that of Mr. Jubril Mahmud a correspondent with the Katsina state Radio, who was frustrated in the process of gathering an investigative report on an alleged registration of under aged voters in Dutsinma local government area of Katsina state during the 2011/2012 voters registration exercise. Mr. Jubril wrote demanding for a copy of the INEC's voters' register, but the Dutsinma resident electoral officer Mallam Ashiru Dan Baba declined and refused to make the information available. The table shows that majority of the respondents which accounts for 52.5% (42 respondents) say ignorance will not allow the Act to work, ignorance on both the part of the journalists and that of managers of public



information. 24 respondents did not respond to the question. This is also illustrated on the above bar chart.

## V. Conclusion

The use of freedom of information Act 2011 by journalist in Katsina state. As rated by journalists drawn from all the media houses, including the Katsina state ministry of information and Correspondent Chapel was determined in response to research question four (4). When considered by all respondents, in their responses analysed in table 12 and 13 in chapter four, majority of the journalists in Katsina did not apply for access to public information, few respondents who applied were denied access and other say bureaucracy was involved in the whole process. Majority of the journalists in Katsina state are aware of the freedom of information Act. Half of those who are aware read the Act. Just 25% of journalist in Katsina state applied for access to public information, only 25% was granted, the rest were denied. From the findings of the study it could be inferred that the freedom of information Act 2011 is a veritable mechanism that can bring openness to the domain of governance and public administration in Katsina State. This can only be achieved if some of the provisions of the act which hinder access to public information are amended, public enlightenment programmes be organised and journalists and media managers of public and private parastatal be trained on information management.

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