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MATRIC NUMBER: 19/Law01/256

COURSE: Legal Method

COURSE CODE: law 102

A secondary source is not the law. It's a commentary on the law. A secondary source can be used for three different purposes it might educate you about the law, it might direct you to the primary law, or it might serve as persuasive authority. Secondary sources are also scholarly materials written by legal experts. They provide a good overview of the law and the text or footnotes can refer to relevant legislation or case law. Few sources do all three jobs well. The important classes of legal secondary sources include: treatises, periodical articles, legal encyclopedias, ALR Annotations, Restatements, and Looseleaf services.

The secondary sources of Nigerian law are the indirect ways through which we get our law. Save for law reports, secondary sources of Nigerian law are of persuasive authority in the law courts. Law reports are only authoritative due to the fact that they serve as the vehicle through which judicial precedent is carried. Secondary sources of law are only made use of whenever there are no primary sources of law to fall back on.

Examples of secondary sources of the Nigerian law are:

1. Law Reports

2. Text Books and Treatises

3. Periodicals, Journals, and Legal Digests

4. Casebooks

5. Legal Dictionaries

6. Newspapers

1.LAW REPORTS

Law reports are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case law decided by courts . When a particular judicial opinion is referenced, the law report series in which the opinion is printed will determine the case citation formatting

In common law countries, court opinions are legally binding under the rule of precedent .That rule requires a court to apply a legal principle that was set forth earlier by a court of a superior (sometimes, the same) jurisdiction dealing with a similar set of facts. Thus, the regular publication of such opinions is important so that everyone lawyers, judges and laymen can all find out what the law is, as declared by judges.

2. Text Books and Treaties

A textbook is a comprehensive compilation of content in a branch of study. Textbooks are produced to meet the needs of educators.

A treaty is a formal written agreement entered into by actors in international law, namely sovereign states and international organizations. A treaty may also be known as an international agreement, protocol, covenant, convention, pact, or exchange of letters, among other terms.

TREATIES

In this context, legal treatises are single or multi-volume works dedicated to the examination of an area of law. Treatises tend to be very good at describing the law, they're good law finders, and many of the classic treatises are persuasive. Treatises tend to provide an in-depth discussion of a particular area of law and will provide the researcher with references to a few cases and statutes.

3. PREODICALS

Legal periodical articles are in-depth discussions of narrow areas of the law and legal issues. Articles in academic journals tend to revolve around very theoretical and cutting-edge legal issues. Articles in practitioner-oriented journals tend to be more practical. Periodical articles can be very good law finders; they tend to have a great many footnotes with a lot of legal citations. Some articles by eminent scholars can be persuasive. Occasionally, legal periodical articles can be useful for explaining the law, but often they are too theoretical .When using an index database such as a legal periodical index or a library catalog, a good strategy is to identify a book or article that looks relevant, notice the subjects or descriptors assigned to the item by the indexer or cataloger and run a new search based on the subjects or descriptors found. In general, full-text sources are not very good tools to use for finding periodical articles on a particular topic. However, there are several databases that include full-text legal periodical articles To use a full-text tool to find periodical articles, a user has to construct an online search and the online search will return articles that contain the particular language that the user chose. An index, on the other hand, will get a user articles that an editor has decided are about the topic selected.

JOURNALS

A journal is a scholarly publication containing articles written by researchers, professors and other experts. Journals focus on a specific discipline or field of study. Unlike newspapers and magazines, journals are intended for an academic or technical audience, not general readers.

A Law Journal is a scholarly or academic publication presenting commentary of emerging or topical developments in the law, and often specializing in a particular area of the law or legal information specific to a jurisdiction, legal periodicals; legal journals; or. law review.

A law review is a scholarly journal focusing on legal issues. Law reviews are a type of legal periodical. In the US, law reviews are normally published by an organization of students at a law school or through a bar association. Outside North America, law reviews are usually edited by senior academics/faculty. In Nigeria law reviews are edited by Lawyers and Judges.

Legal Digest

Digest is an index of legal propositions showing which cases support each proposition. It can also be a collection of summaries of reported cases, arranged by subject and subdivided by jurisdiction and court.

Digests are also the major means of accessing case law by topic. A digest is both a subject index and a topical outline of case law. With rare exceptions, court reports are issued in chronological order. Without an index of some kind, this arrangement makes the task of finding all cases bearing on a single subject virtually impossible. A digest is such an indexing system. However there is one important distinction between an index and a digest: the digest not only lists the cases dealing with a specific subject, it also briefly summarizes or “digests” the opinions reported in those cases.

In addition Legal encyclopedias

Legal encyclopedias are immense sets of books that briefly describe all of the main legal issues for a particular jurisdiction. An encyclopedia can provide a basic introduction to an area of law and will provide the user with some case and statutory citations. Legal encyclopedias will not delve deeply into an area, nor will they discuss the finer points of an area of law. Legal encyclopedias are available online and in print.

4. CASEBOOK’S

A casebook is a type of textbook used primarily by students in law schools. Rather than simply laying out the legal doctrine in a particular area of study, a casebook contains excerpts from legal cases in which the law of that area was applied.

A case book is a compilation of primary and secondary documents relating to a central topic together with scholarly comment, exercises, and study aids that is designed to serve as a sourcebook for short papers (as in a writing course) or as a point of departure for a research paper

5.LEGAL DICTIONARIES

A legal dictionary contains the definitions of legal terms taken from a variety of sources. They are the first place you should look when you do not understand what a legal term means. From my research The two most commonly used legal dictionaries are Black's Law Dictionary and Ballentine's Law Dictionary.

6. Newspaper

A newspaper is a printed publication (usually issued daily or weekly) consisting of folded unstapled sheets and containing news, articles, advertisements, and correspondence.

A legal newspaper of a county is any newspaper which, during a period of one hundred four (104) consecutive weeks immediately prior to the first publication of such notice, advertisement or publication: has maintained a paid general subscription circulation in the county.

In summary , Secondary sources are scholarly materials written by legal experts. They provide a good overview of the law and the text or footnotes can refer to relevant legislation or case law. Secondary sources are useful for putting the law into context, and often will lead a researcher to relevant legislation and cases.

Some other secondary sources of law

\* Government Documents

\* Legal Directories

\* Legal Education materials and seminar papers

\* Law Wikis and Blogs

\* News Sources

\* Listservs

\* Law Firm and Professional Associations Newsletters.