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**MATRIC NUMBER: 19/LAW01/241**

**COURSE CODE: LAW 102**

**LEVEL: 100L**

**ASSIGNMENT: DISCUSS SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW IN NIGERIA**

To understand the secondary sources of law one must first understand what the term law means. What is law? Well, law does not have a definite meaning but to me it is a set of rules or body of rules made by bodies or group of people who have been given the power to make this rules thereby making them binding and enforceable among people in the society.

There are two sources of law. The first is the primary source which can be found in the constitution, judicial precedents, etc. this source is binding on the court of law. The other source which I will be discussing on is the secondary sources of law. This source is usually persuasive in the court of law and are mainly in documentary form it includes journals and periodicals, textbooks, law reports, newspaper, and law dictionaries. They will all be discussed below.

**SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW**

1. **LAW REPORTS:** These are books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case decided by courts. These Law reports are very important especially in a system where the principle of judicial precedent is operational to ensure the smooth running of the system. It is only through reference to reported cases that courts and lawyers in Nigeria can ascertain the position of the law in their areas of jurisdiction.The oldest form of the law reports are year books, which were regarded to be very comprehensive but were criticized because they are notes taken by students and law practitioners for educational reasons. The first Law report in Nigeria is the Nigerian Law Reports founded in the year 1881 but are unfortunately no longer being produced. When a judicial opinion is referenced, the law report series in which the opinion is printed will determine the case citation format. Some of the prominent reports in Nigeria are Nigerian Weekly Law Reports (NWLR), Supreme Court of Nigeria Judgements (SCNJ), Law Reports of the Courts of Nigeria (LRCN), All Nigerian Law Reports (All NLR), and Federal Weekly Law Reports.

1. **JOURNALS and PERIODICALS:** These are jottings of scholars that contains assessments, criticism and analysis of the primary sources of law. They are produced in various forms and colors. Some are professional while some are academic, and some are a mixture of both. They cover the legal field and publish articles that are comprehensive studies of current topics in law. The articles usually contain substantial citations to primary and secondary sources on the topic, which may lead you to additional information on the subject. In Nigeria there are journals published by different law facilities and private law publishers. Some law journals include The Relationship of Law and Morality by B.O. Okere and Electronic Waste and Developing Economies by E.U. Onyeabor.
2. **LAW DICTIONARIES:** They provide meaning to certain words or terminologies used in law. They assist users with finding the meaning and usage of legal terms and abbreviations. They are the first place one should look when they do not understand some terms. Apart from providing definition to the legal term it can also provide references to applicable primary law and other secondary sources of law to give an in-depth discussion of the term. The dictionaries also help one determine a specific court’s interpretation of a legal term. Examples of law dictionaries are Black’s Law Dictionary and Ballentine’s Law Dictionary.
3. **TEXTBOOK and TREATISES:** Textbooks or treatises written by learned scholars and jurist make up an important part of the Nigerian law. Textbooks summaries single specific legal topics while treatises include textbooks and covers a wider subject area. Both provide authoritative and thorough treatment of the subject area. In the summary and commentary on the law they will include tables of content, tables of cases and subject indexes. They are usually available in both print and electronic form. They are potential sources of Nigerian law when there is absence of judicial decisions thereby making it a persuasive authority. When they are cited the importance given to them depends on the status of the author and the significance of the subject matter. Once one has located some preliminary information in texts or treaties you will have known some of the expressions needed to continue in one’s research.
4. **NEWSPAPER:** Watching television and reading newspaper articles is also a source of secondary law. The information gotten here are only persuasive and not authoritative because they are not the law itself, but it can refer to other primary sources of law. Like an article about a certain case would probably have the citation of the case there by referring to the case or an article on a new law being passed in the state.

***Reference***

***Introduction to Nigerian Legal Method edited by Abiola Sanni***

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