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LEVEL: 100

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**INTRODUCTION**

The law, to be specific, Nigerian law is derived from various sources. The sources from which the laws of a country are derived are termed sources of law. What do we mean by sources of law? Sources of law are the origins of laws, the binding rules that enable any state to govern its territory. It may also be defined as the sovereign or the seat of power from which law derives its validity. There are two main sources of law in Nigeria: primary and secondary sources of law. Primary sources of law of Nigerian law could be referred to as the fundamental sources of law that have ground and binding significance. Primary sources of law are laws whose provisions are binding on courts. They determine the decisions or judgements of the court. There are five sources of Nigerian law namely: Constitution, Nigerian legislation, Received English law, Nigerian Case Law, Nigerian Customary & Islamic Law. Primary sources of law are authoritative.

**SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW IN NIGERIA**

Secondary sources of law are the indirect ways we get our law. Secondary sources of law furnish information or are derived from the primary sources of law through examination of the primary sources, critiques of the primary sources or even through discussions bordering on the primary sources. They provide explanation to the primary sources. Secondary sources of law help us to locate the primary sources of law. Save for law reports, secondary sources of Nigerian law are of persuasive authority in 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 background resources. They explain, interpret and analyze. Secondary sources of law are a good way to start research and often have citations to primary sources. Although the primary sources of law-case law, statutes and regulations establish the law on a given topic, it is often difficult to quickly locate answers in them. Secondary sources often explain legal principles more thoroughly than a single case or statute, so using them can help you save time. Secondary sources also help you avoid unnecessary research, since you are tapping into work that someone has already done on the issue.

**Examples of Secondary Sources of Law in Nigeria**

1. Law reports.
2. Textbooks and treaties.
3. Periodicals, journals and legal digests.
4. Casebooks.
5. Legal dictionaries and encyclopedias.
6. Newspapers.
7. Restatements.
8. Law reports: a law report is a compilation of the judgement of other courts such judgements may cover broad areas like constitutional law, family law, administrative law etc. They are in-depth articles on narrow topics of the law.
9. Textbooks and treaties: information about the law can be gotten from ordinary, general and special texts. Treaties are formal written agreements entered into by actors in international law. However, if a treaty becomes domesticated i.e ratified by the legislature of a country it becomes a primary source of law. According to Section 12(1) of the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended.
10. Periodicals, journals and legal digests: Law journals contain the writings of scholars in law with their various analyses, criticisms of the primary sources. The Nigerian Juridical Review is an example of a law journal.
11. Casebooks: Case books are types of textbooks used by students in law schools. No legal document is superior to the other. Information can be sourced from case books.
12. Legal dictionaries and encyclopedias: Legal dictionaries such as Blackslaw dictionary are secondary sources of law. Legal encyclopedias are also secondary sources of law. They provide relevant citations to primary law. They also contain briefs, broad summaries on legal topics.
13. Newspapers: commentaries on the law and cases are often published in newspapers. Legal practitioners can source for information from newspapers.
14. Restatements: Restatements are highly regarded distillations of common law. They restate common law into a series of principles and rules. They are not primary law however, they are considered persuasive by many courts.

**Uses of Secondary Sources of Law**

1. Learning the basics of a particular area of law.
2. Understanding key terms of art in an area of law.
3. Identifying essential cases and statutes.

The distinction between primary and secondary sources of law is very useful in determining which authority holds in courts. If a case is brought before the court and one party uses primary sources of law while the other uses secondary sources, the party that uses primary sources of law is likely to earn the favour of the court. Secondary sources of law are persuasive while primary sources of law are authoritative. Secondary sources of law are only used when there are no primary sources of law to fall back on.