**NAME: DOGO Joseph Danladi**

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**DEPT: LAW**

**QUESTION:**

**What are the secondary sources of law?**

 **Before I begin, I will like to define the term “Law”. law is very diverse in nature. In today’s world, it is essential to have an effective legal system for the orderly function of social life and the existence of mankind. It is very essential for everyone to be aware of the law of the land to avoid any unethical behavior. The term law has many definitions, in layman’s language law means “The system of rules which a particular country or community recognizes as regulating the actions of its members and which it may enforce by the imposition of penalties. The famous jurist Salmond defines law as ‘Law is the body of principles recognized and applied by the state in the administration of justice.**

 **One must know as to what are sources of law, they are the origins of law and also sometimes refer to the sovereign or to the seat of power from which the law derives its validity. They also mean the origin of which rules of human conduct come into existence and derive legal and binding characters. One must know as to what are the sources of law and on which of the sources one can rely upon for justice. It is very important to understand that the law of every land is derived from the sources. There are two main sources of law namely: Primary sources and Secondary sources.**

 **So the main focus of this article is on the secondary sources of law. What are Secondary sources of law? They 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. Searching for secondary sources is the first step in legal research. They are books that assist the researcher in first, explaining and understanding the law and locating the law. Though they are not binding, some materials found in secondary sources can have persuasive value in court.**

 **There are different types of secondary sources which includes:**

**. Textbooks, Treatises, Casebooks.**

**. Legal Encyclopedias**

**. Dictionaries**

**. Books of words and phrases**

**. Acronym and Abbreviation guides**

**. Journals and periodicals**

**. Other Sources**

 **. Government documents**

 **. Legal directories**

 **. Legal Education materials and seminar paper**

 **. News sources**

 **. Law Wikis and Blogs**

 **. Law Firm and Professional Associations Newsletters**

 **There are a number of criteria you can employ to judge the quality secondary sources:**

**. Author: What are their credentials?**

**. Currency: How recent is the information?**

**. Organization: Is it easy to use?**

**. Book Reviews: Have there been any reviews on the book.**

**Legal Dictionaries: They provide definitions of words in their legal sense. These publications provide a short definition of latin legal words. Black’s Law Dictionary is the leading dictionary in the U.S**

**Legal Encyclopedias: They offer broad and general commentary on a full range of federal and state laws, these are most useful as a starting point for researching unfamiliar areas of the law.**

**Legal Periodicals: They are very helpful in locating cases and statutes in a particular subject area. They are also an excellent method of locating current information. Articles in periodicals describe, analyze and comment on the current state of the law**

**Legal Treatises: These are publications that present a highly organized and detailed explanation of a specific area of the law. They are published as single-volume or multi-volume sets.**

**Legal Directories: They are locators for legal and government information. A variety of resources provide information about attorneys, law firms.**

 **Secondary sources offer analysis, commentary or a restatement of primary law and are used to help, locate and explain primary sources of law. It may influence a legal decision but do not have the controlling or binding authority of primary sources**

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