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 SOURCES OF LAW

In order to know what law comprises of the law, you have to derive law from various places. These places from which the law is derived are described as the sources of law. Sources of law can be defined as the binding rules that enable any state to govern its territory. The term ‘sources of law’ may sometimes refer to the sovereign to the seat of power from which the law derives its validity. They are different sources of law which can be primary and secondary sources of law. Secondary sources of law are background resources. They explain, interpret and analyze.

Examples of secondary sources of law can be:

Law reports

Law reviews

Legal dictionaries

Legal treatises

 LAW REPORTS

Law reports or reporters are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of caselaw 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 format. The purpose of a law report is to publicize and distribute to the lawyer and Judges judgements of the courts to widen the base of legal knowledge and to prevent two differing decisions on identical facts or two differing legal theories on a same issue.

Examples of Nigerian law reports are:

E.O. Amodu v J.O. Amode & Anr (1990) 9 NILR 7

The state v Olashehu Salawau (2011) 12 NILR 16

Felicia akinbisade v the state (2006) 9 NILR 291

 LAW REVIEWS

Law reviews or law journals is a scholarly journal focusing on legal issues. Law reviews are a type of legal periodical. They contain both lengthy articles and essays and essays by professors or lawyers, as well as comments, notes, or developments in the law written by students. Law reviews articles often focus on new or emerging areas of law and they can offer more critical commentary than a legal encyclopedia. The law reviews are found in volumes

Examples of Nigerian law reviews or journals:

Nigerian judicial review vol. 10. 2011 - 2012

A critical analysis of the constitution (first alteration) Act ~ O.N. Ogbu

How much force is still left in the taxes and levies act~ N. Ikeyi & S. Orji

Developing a statutory framework for ADR in Nigeria E.O. Ezike

 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. The two most commonly used legal dictionaries are Black’s law dictionary and Ballentine’s law dictionary. A law dictionary (also known as legal dictionary) is a dictionary that is designed and compiled to give information about terms used in the field of law. law dictionaries can serve various functions. The traditional law dictionary with definitions of legal terms serves to help users understand the legal texts they read (a communicative function) or to acquire knowledge about legal mattersindependent of any text (a cognitive function) – such law dictionaries are usually monolingual. Bilingual law dictionaries may also serve a variety of functions. First, they may have entry words in one language and definitions in another language – these dictionaries give help to understand legal texts, usually written in a foreign language, and to acquire knowledge, usually about a foreign legal system. Second, bilingual law dictionaries with entry words in one language and equivalents in another language provide help to translate legal texts, into or from a foreign language, and sometimes also to produce legal texts, usually in a foreign language.

Examples of Nigerian dictionaries are:

Babalola’s dictionary of judicially defined words and phrases

The Nigerian law Dictionary

Seven volumes of Sasegbon’s judicial dictionary of Nigerian law

 LEGAL TREATISES

 A legal treatise is a scholarly legal publication containing all the law relating to a particular area, such as criminal law or trusts and estates. In law schools, treatises are sometimes used as additional study materials, as treatises often cover legal subjects at a higher level of detail than most casebooks do. Legal treatises are secondary authority and can serve as a useful starting point for legal research particularly when the researcher lacks familiarity with a particular area of law. lawyers commonly use legal treatises in order to review the law and update their knowledge of pertinent primary authority namely, case law, statutes, and administrative regulations.

Examples of legal treatises:

The spirits of the law by Montesquieu (1748)

Nimmer on copyright by Melville Nimmer (1963)