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Matric number: 19/law01/059

Course: legal methods

Question: discuss secondary sources of law in nigeria.

Secondary sources of law are the sources of law that do not carry a dominant legal weight and binding effect. The legal authorities contain in these kind of sources are diluted and persuasive which are not binding on any court of law. According to Beredugo(2009), secondary sources of law are less significance sources of law that carry barely persuasive legal authority or effect and are therefore not binding on any court of law. Secondary sources can be useful in court of law or resorted to where the court finds the opinion or fact underlying the authority contained therein. Secondary sources can also be referred to in court if it support the authorities of the primary sources. Example of secondary sources of Nigerian law according to Beruduga include;

* Decisions of courts of foreign countries
* International Conventions and resolutions of International bodies
* Statements or Opinions of jurist and learned authors contained in law textbooks, journals, periodicals, dictionaries, letters, speeches and interviews
* Legal opinion contained in nullified judgements.

Secondary sources of law are mainly in documentary form. They are important because it is in book form that written laws are stated. Some of these sources of law includes; Law reports, Textbooks, Periodicals, Journals, Law digests and Law dictionaries.

1. **LAW REPORTS**: Law reports as well as an efficient law reporting system are essential for a smooth system of judicial administration. This is because in any nation where the principle of judicial precedent is operational, like Nigeria, it is only by reference to report cases that courts and lawyers would be able to ascertain in the position of law in their areas of jurisdiction. The oldest species of law reports are the Year books(1282 – 1537). They are regarded as the most comprehensive report but they are criticized to have been more notes taken by students and practitioners of law for educational or professional purpose. The first form of law report in Nigeria was the Nigerian Law Reports which emerged in 1916 but today they have become extinct. One regrettable trend in the law reporting system in Nigeria is the lack of sustainability. This has been the experience with most Government and private initiatives in this regard.

In Nigeria today, we have quite a number of law reports in circulation, among which are the following;

1. Nigerian Weekly Law Reports (NWLR) published since 1958
2. Supreme Court of Nigeria Judgments (SCNJ)
3. Law Reports of the Courts of Nigeria (LRCN)
4. All Nigerian Law Report (ALL NLR)
5. Federation Weekly Law Report (FWRL)

These and many others, are also serving as sources of Nigerian laws.

1. **LAW TEXTBOOKS AND TREATIES**: A textbook or treatise written by learned scholars and jurist, constitute a very important source of Nigerian Law. It is the same experience in virtually all legal system. Classical authors of outstanding textbooks on the English law include Braxton; Coke and Blackstone. Others like Dice; Cheshire; Hood Phillips; Wade, have continued to emerge over the years. In Nigeria, Legal textbooks of reputable standards have been written by Obilade; Nwogwugwu; Okonkwo; Kodilinye; Aguda among many others. Professor Sagay has written extensively on international law. All these present a potent source of Nigerian law and can be authority where there is scanty or absence of judicial decisions in which situations they could be of persuasive authorities. Where such works are cited, the weight to be attached to them will depend on the personality of the author and significance of the subject covered.
2. **PERIODICALS, JOURNALS AND LEGAL DIGEST:** These are produced in various forms and colors in Nigeria. Some are professional while some are academic, and yet some are a mixture of both. For instance, in Nigeria, there exist learned journals published by different law faculties as well as private law publishers. Digest are equally available for example, the Digest of Supreme Court Cases. Digest are abridgements of cases, that is, they are useful summaries of the facts, issues, arguments and decisions in judicial proceedings. Some foreign legal dictionaries are also available in Nigeria. Some of these are Jowitt’s Dictionary of English law, Stroud’s Judicial Dictionary, Black’s Law Dictionary, etc. All the above provide helpful guidance in interpreting Nigeria Law.

In conclusion, secondary Sources of law also include all sources that provide helpful introduction to legal subjects, synopses of decisions, statutes and regulations in a given field, analyses of trends and historical background of law, explanation of new or difficult concepts, descriptions and analysis of the law and its developments and citations to primary sources through footnotes and annotations.