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**MATRIC NOM**: 19/LAW01/151.

**COURSE CODE**: law 102.

**QUESTION**: DISCUSS SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW IN NIGERIA.

The law is an abstract term. In order to know what comprises the law, you have to derive it from various places. These places from which the law is derived are aptly described as the sources of law.

Sources of law can be defined as the places to which a legal practitioner or a judge turns to in order to answer a legal problem. They can be regarded as springboards from which law emanates. They are various vehicles through which the law is carried out. The sources of Nigerian law can be divided into primary and secondary.

**Secondary sources of law.**

Secondary sources are background materials that describe an area of law.  Such sources detail and give context to the legal issue you are researching and identify relevant statutes and regulations and leading cases.  Secondary sources are not themselves the law.  Rather, they are a helpful way to get an overview of an area of law, to get perspective on how your specific issue fits into the broader legal context, and to get references to the leading primary sources for an area of law.  Secondary sources often are the best place to begin legal research.Secondary sources used in legal research provide commentary on the primary sources of the law. Secondary sources explain legal terminology and legal principles and can help you to identify leading cases and relevant legislation. Secondary Law consists of sources that explain, criticize, discuss, or help locate primary law.

These are like indirect sources of law. Some of them are like references to primary sources; others are opinions of important scholars. They are largely persuasive in nature and are not binding. They are starting points for research into primary sources.

1. **Law Report**: This source is very important in any legal system. For example in Nigeria where judicial precedent is very important, they come in handy. They are compilation of cases; hence lawyers and judges can easily access them for their work. The oldest law reports are the yearbooks (1282-1537). They are regarded as comprehensive but have been criticized because they were taken by students and practitioners for academic purposes. The first form of law report in Nigeria was the Nigeria law reports (NLR) which emerged in 1881 but is now extinct.

There are numerous law reports, examples are:

* Nigeria weekly law reports (NWLR) (started in 1985, by late Gani Fawehinmi).
* Supreme court of Nigeria judgments (SCNJ)
* All Nigeria law report (ALNR)
* Federation weekly law report.(FWLR)
* Law report of the courts of Nigeria (LRCN)

2. **Text books and treaties**: These are textbooks or articles written by learned scholars on different subjects. They are usually used when there are no direct authorities for a case.Examples include : Coke, Bracton and Blackstone. Recently we have: A.V Dicey, Cheshire, Fiffoot, Hood Phillips, Wade etc.

In Nigeria, we have : professor Sagay, Kodinliye, T.O .Elias, Nikki Tobi. Etc. The relevance of a textbook or article depends on the scholar that wrote it and the area of law concerned. See Oyelowo vs Oyelowo in the case, a textbook by Nwabueze was depended upon to decide the case. It should be noted that a provision of a textbook if contrary to previous judicial authority it will not be used.

3. **Periodicals Journals, Legal diges**t: These are produced in various forms in Nigeria. Some are academic, some professional, others a mixture of both. Law journals are published by various law faculties and private publishers.

Legal digest like digest of supreme court cases. Digests are usually abridged summaries of proceedings in court. They contain the facts, arguments, issues and decision of cases. Some dictionaries includes: **Black’s** **law dictionary, Jowitts dictionary of English law** etc.

4. **Casebook**: This is an abridged form of what transpires in a case from the perspective of the author. It is the summary of the case with the comment of the author added.

5. **Legal dictionaries**: The court uses some of these dictionaries to interprete some terms. The adoption by the court makes it a precedent. Hence, if a case comes up later, the definition will be used. Dictionaries are used in the absence of statutory definitions.

6. **Newspapers**: Newspapers are ordinarily newspapers are regarded as private document therefore they are not admissible in court. S.109 of the evidence act lists out private documents. S.109(b) states that a private document in public archive will be regarded as public document. Hence, they can be used in court.

Reference: dJetLawyer.