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**COURSE TITLE: LEGAL METHOD II**

**COURSE CODE: LAW 102**

**QUESTION**

Discuss the secondary sources of law in Nigeria.

To begin to answer this I will start with the classification of the sources of Nigerian law can be done in two aspects, namely, primary and secondary sources. The primary sources include English law (consisting of the received English law as well the extended English law); Nigerian legislation and subsidiary enactments; Nigerian case law or judicial precedent; and customary law rules; including the Islamic law where applicable. The secondary sources of Nigerian law comprise of law reports, textbooks, legal periodicals, law digests, legal dictionaries, newspapers, among others. Its worthy of note that only the primary sources could have binding force on a court of law in Nigeria whereas the mentioned secondary sources can merely serve persuasive purposes, and are usually relied upon where no primary source is available or applicable. For the purpose of this assignment, I will be discussing on just the secondary sources.

**LAW REPORTS**

Law reports or reporters are series of books that contain judicial opinions from a selection of case law 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. In common law countries, court opinions are legally binding under the rule of stare decisis (precedent). That rule requires a court to apply a legal principle that was set forth earlier by a court of a superior (sometimes, the same) jurisdiction dealing with a similar set of facts. Thus, the regular publication of such opinions is important so that everyone lawyers, judges, and laymen can all find out what the law is, as declared by judges.

**LAW TEXTBOOKS**

They are defined as any of numerous volumes dealing with law, including statutes, reports of cases, digests of cases, commentaries on particular topics, encyclopedias, textbooks, summaries of the law, dictionaries, legal forms, and various combinations of these such as case reports with commentaries. Statutes of every state and the Federal Code are published, usually with comments and "annotations" and brief statements of decisions which contribute to the interpretations of each particular statute. The written reports of appellate cases are collected for every state, the federal government, England and many other countries. Collections of digests (brief summaries) of case decisions divided by topics are available for each state as well as federal rulings. There are books on almost every legal subject. Almost all collections of statutes, digests, form books and commentaries are regularly up-dated with the latest decisions, legislative enactments, and recent comments, often with loose-leaf “pocket parts" added each year, and completely new volumes when numerous changes have accumulated. Many of the books are now being replaced or supplemented by computer disks or computer modem services. The earliest known law book was written in 2100 B.C.

**LEGAL DICTIONARIES**

This is a specialized dictionary covering terms used in the various branches of the legal profession, as civil law, criminal law, and corporate law. A comprehensive legal dictionary adds to its body of Standard English entries many words and phrases that have made their way into modern legal practice from law French and Latin and are rarely found in a general English monolingual dictionary. Such a specialized dictionary is useful not only for law students and for attorneys themselves, but for members of the lay public who require legal services. Legal dictionaries published in print follow the normal practice of sorting entry terms alphabetically, while electronic dictionaries, such as the online Dictionary of Law on Dictionary.com, allow direct, immediate access to a search term.

**LAW PERIODICALS**

Legal periodicals contain articles about emerging areas of law and are written by professors, practitioners, judges, and law students. Commonly used legal periodicals include law reviews, law journals, and bar journals. A legal periodical is a periodical about law. Legal periodicals include legal newspapers, law reviews, periodicals published by way of commerce, periodicals published by practitioner bodies, and periodicals concerned with a particular branch of the law. The obituaries and profiles in legal periodicals may be useful to historians and biographers. Book reviews in legal periodicals may be useful to librarians. There is a Book Review Index in the Index to Legal Periodicals.

**LAW JOURNALS**

A law Journal is a magazine or newspaper that contains articles, news items, comments on new laws and case decisions, court calendars, and suggestions for practicing law, for use by attorneys.

The above are some examples of secondary sources of law in Nigeria, although they are essential in aiding lawyers and Nigerian law they serve only a persuasive purpose and are more flexible in usage than primary sources.