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QUESTION: DISCUSS SECONDARY SOURCES OF LAW IN NIGERIA. TIMES NEW ROMAN, FRONT 12, JUSTIFY YOUR WORK.

**ANSWER**

The secondary sources of Nigerian law are the indirect ways through which we get our law. Save for law reports, secondary sources of Nigerian law are of persuasive authority in the law courts. Law reports are only authoritative due to the fact that they serve as the vehicle through which judicial precedent is carried.

Secondary sources of law are only made use of whenever there are no primary sources of law to fall back on. They also often explain legal principles more thoroughly than a single case or statue, so using them can help you save time. Secondary sources also help you avoid unnecessary research, since you are tapping into work that someone else has already done on an issue. Secondary sources are also defined as background resources, they explain, interpret and analyze. They are a good way to start research and often have citations to primary sources.

Secondary sources of law are particularly useful for;

* Learning the basics of a particular area of law.
* Understanding key terms of art in an area.
* Identifying essential cases and statutes.

The secondary sources include;

1. Law Reports: They contain in-depth articles on narrow topics of law. They also provide background analysis and citations to relevant cases, statues, law review articles and other annotations. Law reporting is essential for the growth of case law system, there have been private, governments imitative in this direction. The Nigerian weekly law reports (NWLR) by Chief Gani Fawehinmi and all the Nigerian law reports by the Federal Ministry of Justice amongst others are some of the well compiled and edited series.
2. Legal Periodicals: These are discussions of some areas of law and legal issues. Articles in academic journals tend to revolve around every theoretical and cutting-edge legal issues. Articles in practitioner-oriented journals tend to be more practical. Periodical articles can be very good law finders; they have many good footnotes with a lot of legal citations. Some articles by eminent scholars can be persuasive. Ocassionally, legal periodical articles can be useful for explaining the law, but often they are too theoretical for that. There are many indexes devoted to articles on particular topics. When using an index database such as a legal periodical index or a library catalog, a good strategy to identify a book or article that looks relevant, notice the subjects or descriptors found. In general text, full-text sources are not very good tools to use for finding periodicals articles on a particular topic.
3. Treatises: In this context, legal treaties are single or multi-volume works dedicated to the examination of an area of law. Treatises tend to be very good at describing the law, they are good law finders, and many of the classic treatises are persuasive. Treatises tend to prove an in-depth discussion of a particular area of law and will provide the researcher with references to a few cases and statutes. They are books on legal topics which is a good place to begin your research or find an answer to a question, and will help you save time by providing explanation, analysis, and tips on the most relevant primary sources. Treatises range from single volume overviews to extensively detailed multi-volume sets. They may come in form of bound books updated with pocket parts or looseleafs with easily replaced pages. Some treatises are intended for law students while others are meant for practicing lawyers.
4. Legal Encyclopedias: They are immense sets of books that briefly describe all of the main legal issues for a particular jurisdiction. An encyclopedia can provide a basic introduction to an area of law and will provide the user with some case and statutory citations. Legal encyclopedias will not delve deeply into an area, nor will they discuss the finer points of an area of law. Legal encyclopedias are available online and in print. These books contain brief, broad summaries of legal topics, providing introductions to legal topics and explaining relevant terms of art. They also provide citations to relevant primary law and sometimes give citations to relevant major law review articles.
5. Restatements: They were developed by legal scholars initially to restate the law, and currently to describe what the law should be. In either case, restatements are very persuasive although they are not very good at describing the law. They can serve as adequate law finders, there are restatements for many areas of law but not all. Restatements cover broad topics such as contracts or property. They are organized into chapters, titles and sections. Sections contain a concisely stated rule of law, comments to clarify the rule, hypothetical examples, explanation of purpose, as well as exceptions to the rule. Restatements are not primary law, the most heavily cited restatements are the restatement of torts and the restatement of contracts.
6. Law Journals: Law review or journal articles are another great secondary source for legal research, valuable for the depth in which they analyze and critique legal topics, as well as their extensive references to other sources, including primary sources. Law reviews are scholarly publications, usually edited by law students in conjunction with faculty members. They contain both lengthy articles and shorter essays by professors and lawyers, as well as comments, notes, or developments in the law written by students. Law review articles often focus on new or emerging areas of law and they can offer more critical commentary than a legal encyclopedia. Some law reviews are dedicated to a particular topic, such as gender and the law or environmental law, and will include in their contents the proceedings of a wide range of panels and symposia on timely legal issues.
7. Textbooks: Finally on points of law, especially where such points have not been previously decided in the court or where the position of the law on the point is not clear, courts may turn to textbooks by notable authors for assistance and guidance. But their books are merely persuasive. The Evidence Act specifically provides as regards customary laws that any book or manuscript recognized by natives as a legal authority is relevant. Especially books written Seasoned legal Icons.