

BOOK REVIEW

Book: *Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria: An Encyclopaedic Guide*

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One of the enduring maxims of the common law is that *ignorance of the law is no excuse*. This maxim however flies in the face of democracy which is a system of government that thrives on the participation of citizens if it is to be sustainable, transparent, accountable, and meaningful. Since information is important to the critical engagement of the citizenry in the processes of governance it is no surprise that access to information is not only considered a right, there are now standard procedures to enable people to access information that is often within the control of government. In a developing country such as Nigeria information about legislation is also difficult to get even though there does not appear to be a deliberate attempt by governments to restrict access to legislation. Even though it is also strongly felt that legislation is the business of legal practitioners, considerable obstacles stand in the way of legal practitioners in ascertaining the corpus of legislation in all levels of government. Mr Leesi Ebenezer Mitee must be congratulated for a book that makes it easy for legal practitioners and laymen alike to discover the law.

The book *Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria: An Encyclopaedic Guide* is an excellent primary resource which organises the Laws of Rivers State from the Laws of Eastern Nigeria 1963 to the Laws of Rivers State 2010. Part 1 of the book contains a chronological table of the Laws of Rivers State in that period. Part 2 is an alphabetical table of the Laws of Rivers State for that period. Part 3 of the Book contains Laws of Rivers State between 1963 and 1988 and the author warns on p. 87 that except otherwise indicated, the Laws under this part may no longer be in force. What is educative about part 3 is that there is a short summary of every piece of legislation. Part 4 contains the Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria 1999 and Laws made thereafter between 1999 and 2010. This part presents the current state of the law and like part 3 contains a

more substantive summary of the legislation. In addition the subsidiary legislation for each law are set out. There are five Appendices which essentially define the legislative powers of the Rivers State Government and include the States (Creation and Transitional Provisions) Decree 1967; sections 4 and 105 of the 1999 Constitution. The Appendices also include the Second Schedule to the 1999 Constitution as well as the Revised Edition (Laws of Rivers State of Nigeria) Law 1991.

As a primary resource this is an excellent initiative which should not only be owned by every lawyer but every Rivers man and woman eager to abide by the law and take advantage of its contents. One is disturbed by the author's caution that the laws so excellently arranged may not be exhaustive. If there are other laws not catalogued in this book, it is our hope that they should be reflected in the second edition of this book which should be out, we recommend, in no distant future.

Mr Ebenezer Leesi Mitee is to be congratulated for an excellent work and a groundbreaking treatise in legislation management. I wholeheartedly recommend this book to every law office, to every law faculty and the general public.