



## **STRATEGIES FOR ENHANCING THE ESTABLISHMENT OF CHARTERED INSTITUTE OF BUSINESS EDUCATORS OF NIGERIA (CIBEN)**

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### **Abstract**

*This paper discussed the strategies for enacting Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) Bill and establishing the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN). The paper explained that the benefits of granting full legal status to ABEN include: Full autonomy, full involvement of business educators in Business Education Curriculum Development and standardised practice of Business Education among others. In addition, the paper revealed that poor public perception, inadequate funds and poor attitude of ABEN members are some of the obstacles hindering the enactment of ABEN Act. Therefore, the paper suggested, the constitution of a steering committee for the purpose of obtaining the legal instrument, opening a national secretariat in Abuja and the publication of a recognised code of ethics for members as some of the strategies for enacting ABEN bill and establishing CIBEN. Finally the paper recommended that a policy framework be initiated by ABEN to make the practice of Business Education the exclusive preserve of qualified business educators.*

**Keywords:** *Professionalisation, Strategies, ABEN Bill, CIBEN*

### **Introduction**

There are many professional associations in contemporary Nigeria and many more are still springing up across almost every field of human endeavour. The different professional bodies are set up to develop and monitor professional programmes, update skills and professionally certify individuals as being fit and qualified to function as professional in their chosen fields. One of the important professional bodies in Nigeria is the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN), which is a professional organization that is committed to the growth, promotion and advancement of Business Education in Nigeria with the motto: "Business Education, Our Business," the association was inaugurated as the Nigerian Association of Business Educators (NABE) on the 30th of March, 1984. By implication, the Association will mark 40 years of existence by March 30, 2024. The nomenclature of the association changed in January 2006 when it was finally registered as the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) under the Companies and Allied Matters Act, 1990 with registration number: Reg. N.CAC/IT/NO.20181. (ABEN, 2022).

### **Aims and Objectives of ABEN**

1. To bring together Business Educators in Nigeria.
2. To create, foster and assist subsidiary chapters composed of persons of acceptable professional standing in all the states of the federation.
3. To cooperate with government through their agencies, the private sector and examining bodies for the improvement of Business Education and Teaching Profession in Nigeria
4. To serve as a unifying force between institutions and business communities in the country and to promote Business Education through curriculum development and other means within the framework of educational organisation.



5. To organise conferences, symposia, seminars and workshops in Business Education for business educators and the business community.
6. To promote the professional growth of Business Educators.
7. To publish professional journals, books and/or newsletter for the purpose of disseminating information relevant to the improvement, refinement and updating of instructional technology.

Source: ABEN Constitution R.N-N/CAC/IT/NO.20181. [www.aben.org.ng](http://www.aben.org.ng).retrieved 11th September, 2023.

It is noteworthy that, after more than 39years of existence, the ABEN bill is yet to scale through the hurdles of the legislative process in the Nigerian national assembly and become an ‘Act of Parliament’ that will confer full autonomy and authority on ABEN as the official regulatory body for the practice of business education as a profession in Nigeria. A bill is carried forward through all the stages of the legislative process “by a long chain of standardised motions”, which must be adopted by the House before the bill becomes law. It is these motions, and not the bill, that are the subject of the decisions and debates of the House. These stages “constitute a simple and logical process in which each stage transcends the one immediately before it, so that although the basic motions – that the bill be read a first, second or third/time – ostensibly are the same, and seem repetitious, they have very different meanings. Moreover, the House does not commit itself conclusively in favour of a bill until the final stage, when it takes a decision to let the bill pass from the House or not (Heztel, 2016; Clarence-Smith, 2018 and Peterson, 2019).

The advocacy for ABEN Bill and the establishment of the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN) is a worthwhile call to enhance the practice of Business Education in Nigeria. This noble initiative will entrench the principle of an efficient and effective service delivery by business education professionals who have received the required high level of education and training needed to enable them practice business education as a profession in Nigeria. The implication of this is that the windows for quacks or interlopers in Business Education as a profession will be closed in Nigeria.

Consequently the promulgation of an enabling Act of Parliament will produce a legal framework that will ensure that only the qualified professionals practice Business Education in Nigeria. It is hoped that this legal mandate will help to sanitise the practice of business education as a profession in Nigeria. From the foregoing it is obvious that there is a strong need to pursue the enactment of the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) Bill and to establish the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN). The enactment of a law is the process in a parliament or other law-making body by which bills are passed into law after various stages of reading and consensus by members of the legislative assembly. After any bill has been passed into law, it will be documented as an Act of Parliament. An Act of Parliament is given legal impetus by a presidential assent which involves the signing of the Act into law so that it is binding on every resident of the country, state or community.

The rationale for this paper is hinged on the need to enact a law that makes the practice of business education an exclusive preserve or domain of professional business educators to practice their profession. The exclusive rights conferred on business educators will help to check the excesses of quacks and interlopers who that have infiltrated the domain of business education. The enactment of the ABEN bill will entrench professional values to the practice of business education in Nigeria.

### **Benefits of Pursing the ABEN Bill into Law**

There are tremendous benefits to be derived by ABEN members and the society in general if the ABEN bill is passed into law by the National Assembly. Some of the benefits include the following:

#### **1. Elimination of Political Interference in admission and recruitment**

By virtue of the act of parliament, ABEN will have autonomy and appreciable input in the admission and recruitment of the right personnel for office work and the teaching of business subjects/courses at all levels of education in Nigeria. This will ensure full professionalisation of business education just like law, medicine, engineering and so on.

#### **2. Issuance of Operational License**

Apart from issuing membership certificate to members, ABEN bill will empower the association to issue the license to operate (LTO) to qualified professional business educators. The issuance of operational license to qualified business educators will be adequately coordinated by Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN). The implication of this is that business education will become fully professionalised in Nigeria.

#### **3. Improved working Conditions of Service for Business Educators**

It is pertinent to note that condition of service has been a serious problem in many occupations (Aruma, 2018). The passage of ABEN bill will lead to enhancement in remuneration, welfare packages and



other fringe benefits in business educators' career structure thereby making the business education profession more attractive, rewarding and satisfactory (Umezulike, 2021).

**4. Establishment of Uniform Standards**

The enactment of the ABEN bill will serve as impetus to set standards for practitioners to observe and apply just like other noble professions. The uniform standards can take the form of a common standardised professional qualifying examination leading to the award of a professional certificate an individual must obtain before being allowed to practice as a professional business educator.

**5. Code of Conduct for Business Education Practitioners**

The passage of the ABEN bill will ginger the publication of a code of conduct pamphlet that will be made available and recognised in every institution, agency or establishment where business education is offered or practiced. The code of conduct document will serve as a moral compass that guides the professional attitude of members.

**6. Full involvement of Business educators in Curriculum review**

With the promulgation of the ABEN Act, no policy or curriculum review concerning business education will be undertaken without appreciable input from business educators. Therefore ABEN will be fully involved in whatever decision that is taken at all levels concerning business education.

**7. Increased awareness and respect for ABEN**

The passage of the ABEN bill into law will boost the image of the association and it will increase the public awareness for business education. The enactment of the ABEN bill will equally accord great respect for business educators among professionals in other fields such as law, medicine, accounting and so on.

**8. Provision of vital information to members**

The enactment of ABEN bill will ensure that professional business educators are provided with timely and vital information that will keep them abreast of current global best practices. This will enable business educators prepare contemporary business education students for emerging trends in the world of work.

**9. Promotion of International Collection or Linkages**

The enactment of the ABEN Act will help to promote international collaboration or linkages between the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN) and other related institutes in other countries. Such collaborations or linkages can be in the form of inviting members for international conferences, selection of members as resources persons during workshops and symposia as well as student exchange programmes.

**10. Increased strength to defend members**

The passage of ABEN bill will empower the body to defend the right and welfare of dedicated and upright members whenever such members are marginalized or unfairly treated by the government or their employers (Aruma, 2018 and Umezulike, 2021). Without any doubt the passage of the ABEN bill into law by the national assembly will confer tremendous benefits on the association and its' teeming members.

**Impediments to the Enactment of ABEN Act**

After 39years of existence it is not encouraging that ABEN bill is yet to be passed into law by the national assembly. The reasons for the current state of affairs are multidimensional and it is worthwhile to examine some of the factors impeding the enactment of the ABEN bill:

**1. Poor Public Perception (PPP)**

Most members of the public have very little or no regard for business education as a profession. The society attaches great regard and prestige to professions such as law, medicine, accounting, architecture and engineering. Even in the ivory towers, business education is treated with disdain. With such level of societal apathy, it is a herculean task to push for full professionalization and autonomy of business education.

**2. Bureaucratic Bottlenecks in the National Assembly**

Most members of ABEN have been highly disturbed by the long-drawn battle and redtapism that have dogged the enactment of the ABEN bill. It is worrisome that such a lofty and noble bill has taken more than a decade to be passed into law by the national assembly. The prolonged process has consumed time, physical sacrifices and money, yet the process is still far, taking cognizance of the fact that after the third reading of the bill by the house, the Act cannot become a law until it receives a presidential assent. For the president to sign the Act into law, there will be another round of struggles.



**3. Poor Attitude of many ABEN Members**

It is worrisome to observe that many ABEN members are just after what they can get from the Association. They are not passionate about business education as a profession and by extension they treat ABEN activities with levity. Only very few members pay their annual dues regularly. Furthermore, attendance during the annual national conference has not been very encouraging. Many individuals are only interested in using ABEN membership certificates to get employment while some individuals are just interested in using ABEN conference certificates and journals for promotion in their various places of employment. They are not bothered whether the association moves to the next level or not.

**4. Weak and Non-Performing State Chapters**

It is obvious that most state chapters of ABEN are inactive or non-performing. Most of the chapters do not meet regularly as expected, many chapters do not organize state conferences. The unsatisfactory state of affairs at the local level is further compounded by the ill-treatment meted to members by their employers. Many state governments in Nigeria are owing backlog of salaries and arrears, therefore it is difficult to mobilise many ABEN members working with state agencies and educational institutions.

**5. Political Interference in the Employment of Personnel**

One of the major challenges to the passage of the ABEN bill is the lack of authority by the Association to determine who should be employed to teach business education courses or subjects at all levels of education. Employment of lecturers to teach business education courses in tertiary institutions has been politicized. To worsen matters, teaching appointment is made open to all manners of candidates without stringent conditions that will help to boost the quality of candidates entering into the profession.

**6. Inadequate Funding**

Over the years, ABEN has not been receiving adequate funding from members. Being a non-governmental organization, the major source of funding is members' subscriptions. However, a lot of ABEN members are not alive to their responsibilities in the payment of their annual dues and annual conference registration. Without a strong financial muscle, it will be very difficult to push the ABEN bill to scale the various hurdles that lie on the way to actual enactment or promulgation into law.

**7. Disunity among Business Educators**

Professional business educators have not been operating as a united force in the scheme of things in Nigeria. Personal and sectional interests are being promoted above the overall interests of the association. When all members are united in purpose, it will be easier to forge ahead in the pursuit of the common goal which is full legal autonomy to the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN).

**8. Non-Challant Attitude of the Nigerian Political Class**

It is very obvious that the political class in Nigeria does not accord much regard and respect for Business Education as a profession. This is because most members of the political class are not fully aware of the inherent potentials of Business Education to trigger an industrial revolution that will put the economy on a strong pedestal

**9. Improper Domiciliation of Business Education Programme in some Universities**

It is disheartening to observe that Business Education programme is merged with Educational management or Arts and Social Sciences Education in some Universities in different parts of Nigeria. This is an aberration that must not be allowed to persist further. Business education is a vocational programme and not humanities arts, social science or educational management programme. Improper domiciliation of the Business Education programme in some universities is sending the wrong signals to the government implying that the programme cannot be fully professionalised.

**10. Non-Business Educators teaching Business Education Courses**

Many tertiary institutions are mounting Business Education Programmes for economic reasons in order to boost student enrolment in their schools, the management teams of such institutions mount business education programme but refuse to recruit the right personnel to implement the core business education curriculum. Resultantly, such institutions usually offer courses that have little or no bearing with the core business education so as to suit the calibre of lecturers that they have, since they don't have experts in business education.

**11. Brain-Drain**

In recent years, Nigeria has witnessed the movement of a sizeable number of skilled workers out of the country to other parts of the world in search of greener pastures or the proverbial golden fleece. The mass emigration is referred to as Japa syndrome in street parlance. It is noteworthy that Business Education is not immune from this scourge of brain-drain. Many vibrant and resourceful business educators have migrated from the Nigeria to other countries of the world due to the harsh conditions of



living in the country. Due to brain-drain, it is very challenging to mobilise most of the business educators that remain behind for any purposeful and progressive venture. It is ironical that the human resource is being depleted at a time when mass mobilization is imperative.

### **Strategies for Establishing the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria**

In order to actualize the dreams of past and present leadership of ABEN concerning an Act of Parliament that confers full professional status on the association, it is worthwhile to consider the following strategies.

#### **1. Opening of the National Secretariat**

It is expedient that ABEN should open and commission a national secretariat in the Federal Capital Territory. The domiciliation of the national secretariat in Abuja will enhance a better coordination of the association's activities. In addition, all the statutory documents and other assets of the association will be kept in one place. Moreover, the opening of the national secretariat in Abuja offers the advantage of greater proximity to the national assembly complex where the process of legislation for the ABEN Act of parliament will take place.

#### **2. Composition of a Steering Committee**

A powerful committee comprising all past and present national presidents of the association should be constituted. The steering committee will engage and interface with the necessary stakeholders, government officials, political leaders and officials of the national assembly. Members of the steering committee will enlighten the aforementioned categories of people on the need to grant full autonomy to ABEN, bearing in mind the indispensable role of Business Education in the nation's economy.

#### **3. Code of Conduct**

One of the characteristics of a profession is the publication of a clearly defined code of conduct (ethics) that specifies the standard of practice that members should strictly adhere to. A well-publicised code of ethics by ABEN will send strong signals to the outside world that the association means serious business in instilling professional discipline and regulating the behaviour or conduct of the accredited or chartered members.

#### **4. Appointment of a Legal Adviser**

In order to actualise the enactment of the ABEN Act, it is imperative to appoint a sound legal adviser with an unblemished record and of unimpeachable character. The legal adviser should be someone who shares the vision of ABEN and is ready to operate on the same page with the association. The appointment of a seasoned legal adviser with good track records of accomplishments will act as impetus to the pursuit of chartered status for ABEN.

#### **5. Revival of State Chapters**

Presently, many state chapters of ABEN are not active. There is a dire need to have viable and virile chapters in at least  $\frac{3}{4}$  of the 36 states of Nigeria and the Federal Capital territory. The existence of vibrant state chapters across the length and breadth of Nigeria will galvanise the push for the enactment of ABEN bill and the establishment of the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN).

#### **6. Interaction with Educational Managers**

Another strategy for ensuring the enactment of the ABEN Act of parliament is to effectively interact with the management teams of universities, polytechnics and colleges of education. Through this strategy, many vice-chancellors, rectors and provosts will be adequately enlightened on what business education entails and the benefits the programme offers the education system. The interaction will mainly involve management teams of tertiary institutions offering business education programmes.

#### **7. Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Education**

Various departments in universities offering post-graduate degrees in business education should make serious efforts to mount Post-Graduate Diploma in Business Education (PGDBED) programme for holders of Higher National Diploma (HND) and Bachelors' Degree in business and allied fields. Possession of PGDBED should be a major prerequisite for graduates without qualification(s) in Business Education to proceed for Masters' Degree in Business Education. The PGDBED programme will offer a more specialised training in the principles and practice of business education, unlike the general post-graduate diploma in education.

#### **8. Collaboration with Industries**

ABEN at state and national levels should make spirited efforts to collaborate and partner with business organisations and companies that absorb business education graduates in their workforce. A functional collaboration or partnership with the industrial sector will further lend credence to the advocacy for full professionalisation of business education.



#### **9. Synergy with the Political Class and the Mass Media**

It is very imperative for ABEN to synergise with members of the political class and the press. The political class and the press should be taken as partners in progress. Serious efforts should be made to identify members of the political class and press that are sympathetic to the cause and progress of ABEN. At the national and zonal levels, ABEN should regularly engage the press for coverage of ABEN programmes and wide publicity of ABEN activities. Moreover the national body of ABEN can get involved in press conferences and press releases on matters that are very germane to business education.

#### **10. Diversification of Sources of Funds**

The process of granting full professional status to ABEN and the establishment of the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN) is capital-intensive. Therefore, there is a need to mobilise ABEN members nationwide to pay their annual dues regularly. In addition, ABEN can engage in membership drive across international borders. Qualified business educators from other countries in Africa and beyond can be invited to join ABEN at various categories of membership. The national body can also set up a vibrant committee that will think out of the box and fashion out modalities for diversifying the sources of funds for ABEN.

#### **Conclusion**

The enactment of an Act of parliament conferring full legal status on the Association of Business Educators of Nigeria (ABEN) will provide an opportunity to business educators to exclusively practice their chosen profession without intrusion of interlopers and unqualified people in the profession. However, the credibility of Business Education as a recognised profession depends on a workable code of conduct or code of ethics guiding the operations of members. The establishment of the Chartered Institute of Business Educators of Nigeria (CIBEN) will elevate Business Education to an enviable position of prestige and mobility.

#### **Suggestions**

Based on the issues discussed, the following suggestions were made:

1. A policy framework should be initiated by the national body of ABEN and forwarded to the National Council of Education for enactment of a law that makes the practice of business education an exclusive preserve of professionally qualified business educators. The policy framework of CIBEN should contain the following among other germane items; aims and objectives of the institute, functions of the institute, registration of chartered members of the profession, approval of professional qualifications and the entrenchment of professional discipline.
2. The national executive council of ABEN should remain focused and tenacious in the pursuit of the enactment of ABEN bill. The entire membership of ABEN should rally round the national officers in this onerous task.
3. Operational license should not be issued to individuals that are not qualified to practice Business Education in Nigeria. This will help to check the influx of quakes into Business Education as a profession in Nigeria.

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