Secretariat’s Functions

- Coordination of the National Assembly sessions,
- Coordination and provide Secretarial services to the Standing Committees of the Assembly and its members,
- Facilitate drafting of Acts, Rules and Regulations, Laws and by-laws,
- Preparation of Agenda and Resolutions,
- Centre for Printing, Publication and distribution of the Laws and Resolutions of the National Assembly sessions,
- Maintain and develop Legislative archives,
- Provide/arrange interpretation and translation services,
- Carry out financial and administrative functions,
- Liaise with Parliaments and National Assemblies of other countries,
- Administrative, Management and Monitoring and
- Provide ICT facilities and services

Reforms

- The National Assembly was vested with full legislative supremacy during the 29th session (November, 1968) of the National Assembly under the initiative of the Third King. Till then, the King could veto any decision or legislative bill passed by the National Assembly.
- Another significant reform initiated by the third King in the National Assembly was the introduction of a no-confidence vote during the 30th session of the Assembly in May 1969, where all senior officials, including the King himself could be forced to resign from public service if they received a no-confidence vote in the Assembly.
- The spring session of the Assembly, 1973, however, abolished the system of calling for a no-confidence motion against the King.
- During the 76th session of the Assembly in 1998, despite the spontaneous and emotional pleas of the Assembly members, His Majesty the fourth King issued a historic Kasho, devolving full executive authority to an elected Council of Ministers.
- The Kasho further enunciated that the National Assembly should have a mechanism to move a vote of no-confidence in His Majesty the Druk Gyalpo.
- His Majesty the King commanded the drafting of a written constitution for Bhutan on September 4, 2001. A Constitution Drafting Committee, comprising of 39 members, was formed. The 1st meeting of the Committee was held on November 30, 2001.
- The Draft Constitution was distributed to the people in all the Dzongkhags on March 26, 2005.
- The first consultation meeting with the people chaired by His Majesty the King commenced in Thimphu Dzongkhag on October 29, 2005.
- The consultation meeting on the draft constitution of Bhutan concluded on May 27, 2006 with the people of Trongsa Dzongkhag which was chaired by His Royal Highness Chhoetse Penlop.
- The first Parliamentary election saw the election of:
  - Elected 47 National Assembly Members on 24th March, 2008
- The 1st Session of the First Parliament held in May 2008
- The Draft Constitution was deliberated by the Joint Session of the 1st Session of First Parliament from 8th May to 30th May 2008.
- The Constitution of Bhutan was signed by His Majesty the King and the Members of Parliament on 18th July 2008 at Tashichhodzong.

Conclusion

- The Parliament is the highest decision making body in the Kingdom.
- It is established to suit the genius of Bhutanese people and is not based on any model of other Parliamentary Institutions.
- It plays a crucial role in the enactment of laws and public policies.
- Inception and development of the National Assembly to this stature is due to reforms emanated from the Golden Throne.
Brief History
- His Majesty the Third Druk Gyalpo, Jigme Dorji Wangchuck, established the Tshogdu in 1953.
- It is the highest Legislative and Policy making body in the country.
- The first session of erstwhile National Assembly was held in Namgyal Tseyi Tshokhang in Pungthang Dewachenpo Phodrang in autumn 1953 and
- The First Session of the First Parliament was held from 8 May-29 July 2008.

Aims and Objectives
- To create a deliberative forum to discuss issues of National interests,
- To encourage greater participation of people and
- To develop political consciousness.

Functions
- Enact, amend or repeal laws,
- Approve the National Budget and Taxes,
- Approve the Five Year Plans,
- Deliberate issues affecting the security and well being of the country and
- Promote welfare and happiness of the people.

Representation
- The Parliament of Bhutan consist of the Druk Gyalpo, the National Council and the National Assembly,
- The National Assembly has 47 members representing 47 constituencies directly elected by the people.

Eligibility Criteria for a member
- Should be a citizen of Bhutan as evidenced by the citizenship identity card;
- Should be a registered voter of that constituency;
- Should be of the minimum age of twenty five-years and not more than maximum age of sixty-five years at the time of filing the nomination; and
- Should possesses a formal university degree.

Office and Privileges
- All members are equal in the National Assembly,
- Enjoy freedom of speech and immunity from arrest during the Session,
- Elected for a period of five years and
- Receive prescribed pay and allowances.

Presiding Officer
The Speaker of the National Assembly, elected from amongst its members also preside over Joint Sitting of the Parliament.

Eligibility Criteria for a member
- The Speaker of the current Parliament is Hon Jigme Zangpo

Session Time
- The Assembly meets twice a year,
  Summer Session: May - June
  Winter Session: November - December
- The Assembly normally lasts about 4-6 weeks.

Procedure
- Each session of Parliament starts with an elaborate traditional ceremonies,
- The proceedings are regulated by the Rules of Procedures of the National Assembly.
- The elected members take Oath or Affirmation of Office before assuming their responsibilities.
- The Prime Minister, the Ministers, the Speaker and the Dy. Speaker also take Oath of Secrecy.
- Observance of proper attire of National Dress and Speech code,
- Proper floor decorum and
- Observance of courtesy and respect among the members.

Committee
There are 10 standing committees in the National Assembly consisting of Members elected by the National Assembly of Bhutan. Through its committees the National Assembly obtains information from Government agencies and advice from experts on matters under discussion.

1. Legislative Committee
2. The Public Accounts Committee
3. The Foreign Relations Committee
4. Social and Cultural Committee
5. Human Rights Committee
6. Good Governance Committee
7. Environment and Urban Development Committee
8. Women, Children & Youth Committee
9. Economic Development & Private Sector Committee
10. House Committee

National Assembly Secretariat
- Initially the functions and working of National Assembly Secretariat was executed by the Royal Secretariat,
- A separate National Assembly Secretariat was established in 1973,
- At present National Assembly Secretariat has 4 divisions.