#### **CHAPTER 9: TOURISM**

The tourism industry has been an important source of hard currency to Bhutan since the country was first opened to tourism in 1974. The potential as far as foreign exchange earnings are concerned are very high, though the Government has followed a strategy regulating the number of tourists coming into Bhutan.

The main statistics of the interest in the field of tourism relate to the characteristics of visitors and the details of existing tourist facilities, interest centers on visitor arrivals, where they come from, when they come and the purpose of their visit. Earning of foreign exchange from the overseas visitors is another important aspects.

There has been a steady rise of tourist arrivals in the country during the 1990s through 2000 while in 2001 there was a slight decrease in tourist arrivals. The largest numbers of tourist arrivals have been originating from the United States of America, Japan and the United Kingdom.