INTRODUCTION

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1.1. INTRODUCTION

The development of society largely depends upon the access to information. The role of information in any society, community or organization cannot be overemphasized because information is considered as an important component for the improvement of the economic and social life of any community. It has become an essential ingredient for the growth and improvement of living standards. It is an important resource and vital input for socioeconomic and cultural development of any nation. The societies; who is really developing, generating, applying and disseminating new information or existing knowledge about the social-economic uplift of the people. A person needs information for satisfying desires for which have to seek information. For the development of any one, it is necessary to feel their information needs and sharing pattern. It is a good sign that planners and policy makers are now launching specific schemes for the development of any community.

Access to information is a key resource in maintaining active and independent lives. It is an effective material for the development in both rural and urban communities. The development of any nation depends upon the ability to acquire, produce, access and use effective information. Bell (1979) holds the view that, “the dependence upon information to create innovations and change, places a high premium on the ability of some nations to access and use information to create advances in society”. Today nations of the world are divided as information rich and information poor. Their economic strength and cultural richness largely depend on the facilities available for access to information by their citizens. Humans live as said by Karl Popper (1978), in three worlds. They are the national world, the mental world, and the information world. Man is an information producing animal, this
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distinguishes him from other beings. Information is the largest and inexhaustible resources which have turned into the 21st century as the most crucial one of the emergence of the concept of freedom, justice and equality and growth of democratic tradition. In view of the role played by information in our daily life; it should be considered as the first need in terms of survival. They need information about the availability of food, shelter, building, protection of territory, ensuring security and success which are primarily of organic importance. Without information, it is difficult to go through the challenging process of life.

Factors attributed to the value of information are mainly research and development, the fusion of science and technology, societal information, information technology and information demand. There are a number of catalytic pressures such as the growth of population, social differentiation and reorganization, technological innovation, growth in education, life expectancy and social welfare. Information has become a source of economic and political power and driving force of acquisition of wealth and political strength. Regarding information, the rich countries are becoming more and more rich and powerful and the information poor countries cannot compete with the information rich ones because they have less capital and less knowledge. Even developing countries like India, because of the great value of information are now engaged in cyberspace and the information superhighway. The availability of information is essential for the development of a healthy community. It should be considered as the vital need in terms of survival in daily life.

1.2. NATURE AND CONCEPT OF INFORMATION

Today, many disciplines use the term ‘Information’ in one way or another. It is now common within a wide academic spectrum. But there are differences in meaning between the applications of this expression in different
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disciplines. Many definitions have been attempted, but not a single agreeable definition comprehending all its aspects has been arrived at so far. In a restricted sense, the simple meaning of ‘information’ is a sensible statement, opinion, fact, concept or idea or an association of statements. It is important to define and analyze the term ‘information’ for understanding the nature and concept of the term.

The Third New International Dictionary of the English language (Webster, 1971) defines information as “the knowledge communicated or received concerning a particular fact or circumstances.” In other words, information “is to inform or tell a thing told.”

According to Oxford English Dictionary (1989), (i) Information in the action of informing; formation or moulding the mind or character, training, instruction, teaching; communication of instructive knowledge (ii) The action of informing; communication of the knowledge or “news” of some fact or occurrence; the action of telling or fact of being told of something (iii) Knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject or event; that of which one is apprised or told; intelligence, news.

According to L H Harrod’s Librarian’s Glossary and Reference Book (1977), “Information is an assemblage of data in a comprehensible from recorded on paper or some other medium and capable of communication”.

Hoshvosky and Marsey’s (2013) view of information as data used to solve problems. They consider, “Information as a process which occurs within human mind when a problem and data for its solution are brought into productive union. Information is a data of value in decision making”.

Some authors treat information as a message, J H Shera (2013) also has a similar view when he says that information should also bring a response in the recipient. He says further, in a generic sense it is that which is transmitted
by act or process of communication. It may be a message, a signal or stimulus. It assumes a response in the receiving organism and therefore, possesses response potential. In the context of user studies, research, the term information is used to denote a physical entity or phenomena; the channel of communications through which message is transferred, (As when we speak of the incidence of oral versus written information), or the factual data empirically determined and presented in a document or transmitted orally.

Knowledge and information are often used interchangeably, but some authors are able to make a difference. Farradane(1980) makes a difference between these two terms. Information is physically surrogate of knowledge (i.e. Language) used for communication, while knowledge is memorable records of a process in the brain, something available in the mind, production of consciousness in the mind as present but quite unexplained.

In the view of different definitions, McGrayy (1975) summarizes varied attributes to see the nature of information.

1. Information can be regarded as a synonym of fact.
2. It has a transferring or reinforcing effect on what is known, or believed to be known, by a human being.
3. The information is used as an aid in decision making.
4. Information is the freedom of choice one has in selecting a message.
5. Information is a necessary piece of something when we are faced with a choice. The amount required depends upon the complexity of decisions to be made.
6. Information is the raw material from which knowledge is derived.
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In this study, the concept of ‘information’ was used to denote a physical entity or phenomena; the channels of communication through the messages are transferred or the factual data presented in a document or transmitted orally.

1.3. ROLE OF INFORMATION IN SOCIETY

Information has become an essential ingredient for the progress of civilization and society. Lack of information and its effective means of communication are now widely recognized as being limiting factors in socioeconomic development of the people. In a society a large percentage of the population is directly or indirectly engaged itself in the production, organization of dissemination of information. It is true that in modern days, society is known as knowledge intensive, knowledge generating, knowledge based. Information is on the whole, a social resource, a social function. As a social right, information which aims to make people more aware and to give a full understanding of the economic and political dimensions of the problems on both national and international planes.

Food, clothing and shelter are the basic and essential needs of human beings. All the governments want to provide higher levels of living for their people. This goal can be achieved effectively only through massive programmes of directive change, generally known as developmental programs. Development is a type of social system that produces higher per capita income and improves standards of living through modernized production methods and improved farming. Efficient farming methods help the people to increase production and overcome poverty. Many interacting forces are included in the development process. Education is one of them. Development can be achieved only with the people’s acceptance of the change. Generally advanced technology is not reaching the people due to lack of proper communication. Therefore the majority of the people do not
have the exposure to the development programs and technology. The weaker sections of the people partially disadvantage in this matter.

Information is an important component in the strategy for the promotion of economic and social development. Societal needs for information are identified at two levels, survival and local information. Survival information relates to housing, income, health, law and the human rights. Local information relates to recreation, education, local events and community developments. Community is increasingly depending upon access to information to enable its members to participate fully, effectively and equally in the daily life of their communities. Information is needed by both individual and groups of individuals. The nature of the need depends on the type of society in which they live. The need for information is problem oriented at personal and group levels. The people seek information in the hope of finding answers and solutions to their problems.

The information needs of a community can be classified into general and specific. General information needs are those which are felt by all people. The matters are as consumer problems, money matters, employment news, legal information and housing information. In addition to these general information needs of all people, there are specific information needs of special groups, they are disadvantaged that they cannot identify or express their information needs. They are not also aware of the agencies that offer welfare services and special programmes to improve their living conditions. In the present study, the investigator refers to tribes as one of these special groups.

1.4. TRIBAL COMMUNITY

India is a pluralist and multi-cultural country, with rich diversity, reflected in the multitude of culture, religion, language and racial stocks. The
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population of the country is comprised of different castes, communities, social and ethnic groups. India a second most populous country in the world has also the second largest concentration of tribal population, perhaps next to Africa. The constitution of India had recognized tribal population as weaker sections of society based on their socioeconomic backwardness and the age old social discrimination and physical violation that they had been subjected to. There are at present more than 700 tribal groups, each with their distinct culture, social practices, religions, dialects and occupation and are scattered in all states and Union territories in India except for the states of Haryana, Punjab, Delhi, Chandigarh and Puduchery. The tribes are highly concentrated in the North Eastern States, although they constitute a small percentage of the total tribal population in India. The total tribal population of India stands at 104,281,034 as per 2011 census and accounts for 8.6 % of the total population of the country.

In India the term ‘Adivasi’ has gained immense popularity in the last few decades to identify the tribes. This term is more commonly brought to use by the mainstream India. Scheduled Tribe’ in India is generally considered to be ‘Adivasi’, literally meaning ‘Indigenous People’ or original inhabitants. The term ‘Scheduled Tribe (ST)’is not conterminous with the term’ Adivasi’. Scheduled tribe is an administrative term used for the purpose of administering certain specific constitutional privileges, and benefits of specific sections of peoples historically considered disadvantaged and backward.

The tribes are older on the Indian soil than the Vedic Aryans. They are different from the great mass of the Hindu Caste Society in their appearance, habits, culture. They have maintained cultural continuity with their past, up to present times. Each tribal group has its own ethnic and social profile with a historical specificity. Every tribe is a distinct society in itself. In this sense a
tribe can be defined as an isolated, unstratified, homogenous group without any interdependence and interaction. They have their own special lifestyles, culture, customs, traditions, and religious practices. Tribes do not have a written script. Their history can be traced only through their oral tradition and religious practices. Now a day’s many tribes blindly follow the modern culture. As a result, they are losing their unique culture, land and language, etc. They are becoming a minority community exploited by others.

Kerala is a homeland of a number of tribal communities. There are 37 tribal communities notified in Kerala, numbering 484,839 (Census Report, 2011) spread over all the fourteen districts of the state. They constitute 1.45 % of the total population of the state. Wayanad has the highest number of tribes with 37.36 percent, followed by Idukki (14 per cent) and Palakkad (10.89 percent) which constitutes for more than 60 percent of Scheduled Tribes (STs) in the state (Kerala State Planning Board, 2013)

History has shown that tribal communities in Kerala have suffered from enjoying any meaning development largely because of the policy implementation gap automatically created by the Governments and the policy makers. The consequences of this neglect resulted in tribal communities lacking access to basic needs such as water, food, education, health care, sanitation. Moreover, literacy is quite low among the tribes, and as UNESCO has since established, education is the catalyst of meaningful development without which no nation can propel it into the modern era.

In this study on tribes (a special group), the investigator has noticed that, for centuries tribal communities remained cut off from the national mainstream. They are deprived of basic amenities of life, such as food, shelter, education and health. Since independence in its planned developmental schemes, no impact was seen in the tribes. It was evident that there were some serious communication gaps. To find out this, related
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literature was reviewed. Personal visits to the tribal hamlets were also made by the investigator to obtain first hand information. Review of the literature and on the spot study showed that the effective communication system is lacking among the tribes. It was probable that this factor may be the Achilles’ heel in the tribal world in Kerala

1.5. NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Kerala holds a unique position in the tribal map of India. There are forty eight tribal communities throughout the state, out of which thirty seven was scheduled tribes and the rest are denotified tribal communities. Every district in Kerala has some tribal population, they are found significantly in the districts of Wayanad, Palakkad, Malappuram, Kasargod, Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram. These districts are having 80 per cent of the tribal population in Kerala.

The tribes in Kerala constitute a weaker section of the community. They are subjected to various types of exploitation for generations and their life is characterized by servitude, poverty and misery. The various tribal communities differ from one another in racial traits, language, social organization, economy, religion, beliefs, customs and manners. Generally speaking, the tribal community is still under the clutches of its tradition. A large majority of the tribes depends on land either as agricultural laborers or cultivators for their living. Therefore, there is not much difference between them in their income and standard of living. They are in the grip of subsistence economy and indebtedness is the normal aspect of their life. Educational, social or cultural standards both these groups are almost identical. Backwardness is the hallmark of tribal existence. Thus the tribal situation in Kerala presents a mixed scene of hope and despair.
The development strategy adopted in Kerala has acclaimed worldwide. The popular ‘Kerala Model’ of development has served as theoretical basis for many approaches at the international level. The development schemes designed and implemented by the Union and State Governments for the advancement of the tribal communities have been so far met with limited success. The tribal people have not been able to avail themselves of even the limited means and opportunities provided through the implementation of governmental schemes for their advancement. This is because of lack of awareness. To tackle the issue and overcome the barriers, it is necessary to provide information and advice about the services that are available to the tribes.

The present study is a modest endeavor to examine the information needs of the tribes and design an effective information and communication system for the development of the tribes of Kerala. Efforts have been made to assess the efficacy of the organizational structure and system of rural library to implement the tribal development. There have been several studies of public libraries, but few on libraries in rural areas. The present study aims to design an information and communication system through rural libraries to meet the information needs and its role in the socioeconomic cultural political and educational advancement of tribes of Kerala.

In Kerala, the tribal communities are found almost all districts. While selecting an area of study, the investigator considered different territorial groups and decided to select an extremely backward area. In Wayanad there are 1938 tribal hamlets consisting of Paniyas, Kurumas, Adiyas, Kurichias, Ooralis and Kattunaikans. Apart from these groups there are also small groups like Kadar, Kalaadis, Karimpalan, Kunduvadiyar, Techanadan, Pathiyar and Malayarayans. In the Wayanad district, there are 174 rural libraries recognized by the State Library Council and many libraries
run by other governing bodies. The investigator selected Wayanad district for the study because Wayanad has the highest tribal population and many of them inhabit mostly in remote areas. This will reflect the real life among the tribes. The investigator personally visited the area to observe and understand the physical environment, customs, attitudes and characteristic features of tribal community. The preliminary observation helped in the design of the community profile. The observation during the field study has helped to draw a full account of that area. The investigator made detailed discussion with the tribes, tribal chiefs, the officials engaged in the developmental programmes and the social workers in these areas. As a result of the field study and observation, the investigator realized that the provision of library organization is very poor and the utilization of library service is even poorer. To improve this situation there is a vital need to design an effective information and communication system in the tribal area.

At present there is no permanent mechanism to disseminate information to the tribes. The existing institutions involved in the tribal development are a part of an old bureaucratic organization suffering from severe limitations. Ignorance developed among the tribes seems to be a permanent barrier to development. Hence there is no conscious demand from their side for getting the right information at the right time. At the same time, information about government facilities is received by the educated middle class who consume most of the benefit arising out of the government activities. Hence there is the need to develop an information and communication system and different services to be granted for the benefit of all sectors, abolishing all barriers of communication, an effective information system can play a vital role in this regard. With a view to enrich the quality of life of the tribes, developmental efforts from the part of the government should be supplemented by the implementation of a well-planned network of community information system.
1.6. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A research problem is a statement about an area of concern, a condition to be improved, a difficulty to be eliminated, or a troubling question that exists in scholarly literature, in theory, or in practice that points to the need for meaningful understanding and deliberate investigation. In various situations it may be asked to come up with the specific kind of written item that is known problem statement. A problem statement is essentially a clear description of an issue, it includes a vision, issue statement, and methods used to solve the problem.

The problem under study is “INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT IN KERALA”.

1.7. DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Key terms are basically terms or words, those found in a title of a research study that may be unfamiliar to the reader must be defined in this section. It is important to include definition of terms in a thesis or dissertation in order to understand the key terms being used in the study. These terms should be clearly defined according how they are used in the study in order to make easy understanding of the problem and avoid ambiguous meaning to terms which can be otherwise interpreted in different ways.

The key terms used in this study is described below:

1.7.1 INFORMATION SYSTEM

Information

Webster’s Third New International Dictionary of the English Language Unabridged (1971) defines. ‘Information’ as something received or obtained through informing as facts or figure ready for communication or use as
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distinguished from those in corporate in a formally organized branch of knowledge’.

In this study the term Information is closely interlocked with growth and development which is reflected in many ways, as seen in the growth of economic, political, social, occupational, cultural and other sectors. The concept of information has to be understood in its relation to many other associate concepts such as data, fact, observation, intelligence, skill, knowledge, experience, wisdom.

System

The Oxford Dictionary (1989) defines the term System as a set of things working together as a part of a mechanism or an interconnecting network; a complex one.

The term System used in this study as, an organized, purposeful structure that consists of interrelated and interdependent elements (components, entities, factors, members, parts etc.). These elements continually influence one another (directly or indirectly) to maintain their activity and the existence of the system, in order to achieve the goal of the system.

Information System

According to Encyclopedia Britannica,(http://globalBritannica.com/EBchecked/topic/287895/information-system)Information System is an integrated set of components for collecting, storing and processing data and for delivering information, knowledge and digital products.

The concept of Information System in this study as an information system consists of a collection of people, processes, data, models, technology forming a structure which serves some organizational purpose or function.
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An **Information System** is a set of interrelated components that collect (or retrieve), process, store, and distribute information to support decision making and control in an organization. In addition to supporting decision making, coordination and control, information systems may help managers and workers analyze problems, visualize complex subjects, and create new products.

1.7.2 **TRIBAL DEVELOPMENT**

**Tribe**

Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary of Current English (1995), defines the word *Tribe* as “a racial group, especially one united by language and customs, living, as a community under one or more chiefs”.

The term ‘*Tribe*’ applied in this study as a tribal community living in Wayanad District, Kerala. They are Paniya, Adiya, Mullakuruma, Kattunaikans, Uralikurumar and Kurichiyans. They are characterized by their own language, cultural heritage, and living styles.

**Tribal**

According to Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English (2004), the meaning of the term *tribal* as, something related to tribes.

The term *Tribal* used in this study as something related to socioeconomic, political, cultural and educational spheres of tribal life.

**Development**

The term *Development* is generally used in the sense of a process through which desired change is brought about by directing, in a planned manner, the ever going process of change itself with the help of necessary but socially approved means of social progress.
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The term Development is used in this study as a process that brings about changes in locations where people live, work, and share things in common while factoring in social, economic, political, educational, and cultural impact as well as socioeconomic, cultural, educational and political wants and needs.

Tribal Development is a very complex subject and term tribal is referred in demographic term, and development means systems towards an increasing measure of power to the people for participation in building their own future, higher production, equal distribution. The meaning of tribal development is to improve the economic and social life of the tribes and weak sections of the tribal areas in the overall spectrum of development and growth in Kerala.

In this study the term Tribal Development used to denote the overall development as socioeconomic, political, educational, and cultural development of the tribal community in Kerala.

1.7.3 KERALA

A state of South India formed in 1956 from Travancore, Cochin and Malabar and is located on the South west edge of India. It is a narrow strip of land and lies between the Western Ghats mountain range on the eastern side and the Arabian Sea on the Western and known for its scenic beauty has a population of 33,388,000 (Census, 2011) and is spread over an area of 38,863 km sq.

In this study, Kerala is denoted as the geographical area where the tribes are living.
1.8 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main objective of the study is to design an effective information and communication system for the development of tribes in Kerala. A section of people was notified as Scheduled Tribes in India under the President’s Order 1950. Society brand them as unhygienic, idle, drunkards, uncultured, thankless, unreliable etc. They are deprived of all human rights. Prolonged bondage had an effect of corroding their sense of selfhood, eating away what little remained of their hopes and aspirations. The Directive Principles of State Policy declare that the state shall promote with special care the educational and economic interests of the weaker section of the people, in particular, those of the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes and protect them from social injustice and all forms of exploitation. But some scholars have been pointed that it has not been attempted so far successfully. In the light of these conditions of the tribes in Kerala, the investigator selected highly tribal concentrated area for the study – Wayanad District. The Investigator selected six Tribal groups from the Wayanad District. The following are the objectives considered to achieve the main objective of the study.

1. To analyze and study the tribes and their characteristics.

2. To identify the information needs of the tribes.

3. To determine the status of the rural libraries in the tribal areas.

4. To study the efficacy of the rural libraries in meeting the information needs of the tribes.

5. To study the nature of the collection and its use and the services provided by the rural libraries in the tribal areas.
1.9. HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

The pilot study conducted for the preliminary qualifying examination shows that the tribal people are away from the development programs of the Government and other establishments in the tribal settings. Various schemes have been launched by the Central and State Governments as well as by the local self-governing institutions for the development of the tribes. Studies on this aspect reveals that most of this development programs became a failure as they were not needed based and community oriented. To be more specific the study proceeds with the following hypotheses:

1. The rural library has no prominent role in the socioeconomic, political, educational and cultural setting of the tribes.

2. There is a lack of an effective communication medium to disseminate the information from government level to tribal communities.

1.10. METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The investigator plans to select six hundred tribes from the 6 tribal communities and 150 rural libraries in Wayanad district for the proposed study. Structured interview schedules for the tribes and the rural library staff are the major tool for the collection of data. Along with this, observation, examination of official records and other secondary sources need for this study.

1.11. SCOPE AND LIMITATION OF THE STUDY

The present study intends to design an effective information and communication system for tribal development in Kerala. Most of the tribes of Kerala state belong to the famous family group of Dravidians; commonly called “Adivasi”. The Majority of the tribes in Kerala is living in dense forests and mountains of Western Ghats mainly bordering the states of Karnataka and
Tamil Nadu. According to the Census of India (2011), the Scheduled Tribes in Kerala are 4,84,839. The tribal peoples groups who are food-gatherers in the forests, with diminishing population and very low literacy rates. The tribal communities are found in almost all districts of Kerala but numerically dominant tribes inhabit the 6 districts of Kasargod, Wayanad, Malappuram, Palakkad, Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram, but Wayanad has the largest tribal population. The tribal communities constitute 17 percent of the population of Wayanad district and roughly one third of all the Adivasi communities of the state. The Main communities of the district are Paniyans, Adiyans, Kattunaikans, Mullakurumas, Uralikurumas and Kurichians. These communities form the poorest section of the population of the district and they fall behind the rest of the population of Kerala in terms of literacy, income and health. Despite being a significant section of the population of the district they do not have adequate representation in the decision making bodies, including the local leadership of major political parties. The majority of the tribes of Wayanad is agricultural Laborers and general laborers.

Rural libraries in Wayanad can be categorized into two as rural libraries recognized by the State Library Council and libraries are run by social agencies and other institutions. There are 174 rural libraries are recognized by State Library Council.

The study is limited to the rural libraries recognized by the State Library Council in Wayanad District and the 6 tribal communities inhabited in that area.

1.12. ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

Report of the study organized in eight chapters. The preliminary part, bibliography and appendix are also given appropriate places. The main body of the report is organized as detailed below.
Chapter 1 Introduction

This chapter includes an introduction of the topic, need and significance of the study, a statement of the problem, definition of key concepts, objectives of the study, methodology used in brief, scope and limitations of the study and organization of the report.

Chapter 2 Tribes of Kerala: Problems and Welfare

This chapter includes an overview of tribes in Kerala, which describes definition of tribes, settings of tribal population in Kerala, conditions and problems, and tribal development.

Chapter 3 Review of Related Literature

This chapter presents the studies previously done, related to the problem concerning tribal issues, tribal development, rural community and their information needs and the library services. And also describes some news about the tribal people telecasted by various Malayalam Channels.

Chapter 4 Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology used for the study, which contains the design of the study, variables used for the study, selection of sample, tools and methods used for data collection, data collection procedure, consolidation of data and statistical techniques used in this study.

Chapter 5 Data Analysis-I: Information requirements of tribes

The chapter 5 describes the analysis of the collected data through the interview schedule for tribes (AppendixI {Malayalam} &II {English}) and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques.
Chapter 6 Data Analysis-II: Role of rural library in tribal development

This chapter describes the analysis of the collected data using the interview schedule for the rural librarian (Appendix III) and interpreted using appropriate statistical techniques.

Chapter 7 Findings, Conclusion and Recommendations

This chapter contains the major findings of the study, testing of the hypothesis, suggestions and the proposed model of information system.

Chapter 8 Information and communication System for Tribal Development in Kerala: A Proposal

Based on the analysis in chapter 5 and chapter 6 of information needs of the tribes and the services as provided by the rural libraries to meet the requirements of tribes, chapter 8 put forward the proposal for establishing an information system for tribal development in Kerala. The functions of the information system and the categories of the information are to be included. The information needs of the tribes, the levels of implementation are outlined. Organization, management aspects and functions of information system also presented.

The appendix and bibliography are also provided at the end.
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