UNIT 16 SOCIAL CHANGE, IDENTITY AND INTEREST

Structure

16.1 INTRODUCTION

This unit introduces the learners to a range of aspects concerned with tribal women, social change and interest. The unit focuses on the women subject in the context of tribal communities. In the previous units, you have read about gender relations among the tribal communities and the relegation of tribal women from the system of production in the new economy. Here, we will try to understand how women in tribal societies engage with social change in the contemporary period and how they interrogate/experience agency in the process of social transformation. Social change is perceived not only through movements but also through individual experiences. The unit aims at analysing tribal women's engagement with knowledge production and other structures by which they have become catalysts of social transformation at both individual and collective levels.

16.2 LEARNING OUTCOMES

After going through this unit you will be able to:

- Analyse how tribal women have become agents for social change;
- Understand the role of women in new realms of change including natural resource management, food security and environment; and
- Raise and articulate tribal women's question in relation to identity and interest with the help of case studies.

16.3 WOMEN, INTEREST AND SOCIAL CHANGE: AN EMPIRICAL ACCOUNT

The relationship between tribal communities and social change has been an area of enquiry within the disciplines of sociology and anthropology. The role of tribal women in the change process still needs articulation in the academic literature. Moreover, the interrelationship between tribal women and social transformation has been contextualised in relation to social and ecological movements. Particularly in the context of ecological movements, women have played a significant role to resist government's push for unsound ecological developmental projects. In the works of Vandana Shiva (1997), Vibha Arora (2007) and Sumi Krishna (2009), the role of tribal women in the protests and ecological movements has been discussed while analysing the cultural base of every protest to preserve the sacred places, symbols and seeds. In some sense, women from ethic communities or peasant communities have been accorded the identity as bearers of culture. Moreover, the nature and extent of women's participation in struggles and resistance movements need to be articulated in the academic literature.

According to **Indra Munshi Saldanha**, most of the tribal and peasant struggles have been analysed from a male perspective, thus the specific contribution of women in the struggles is not widely discussed. To engage with the discussion on tribal women and social change, it is important to reflect upon the aspects of women's knowledge, their forms of participation in struggle and their role as change agents. Saldanha states that in the analysis of tribal movements and mobilisation, women are rarely accepted as a distinctive group and they are primarily seen as supporters in the struggle. She has discussed the role of tribal women in the Warli Revolt of Maharastra by narrating women's experiences in countering the police, hiding the men during search operation, and placing gender oppression at the forefront. These are some of ways in which you can observe the relationship between tribal women and social change and their assertion as a group/collective.

As you have read in the first unit of this block, the relationship between women and tribe has always been viewed as an egalitarian one; however tribal women are also deprived from certain socio-economic privileges. In the tribal societies, women enjoy certain privileges with regard to freedom of mobility and their access to common property resources. However, they experience gender inequalities in establishing their rights, ownership and control over economic resources. With this background, this unit will focus on the agency of women for fighting gender inequalities in tribal communities. Since, we have discussed the relationship between tribe and women in the first unit of this block, this unit discusses the issue of social change in the contemporary context. We would be looking at some of the case studies which are suggestive of tribal women's collective initiative towards safeguarding their interests and autonomy within the community.

16.3.1 Empowering Tribal Women through Self Help Groups (SHG)

Self-help groups are the most significant agents in bringing change among the tribal women. Through the initiatives of government and civil society organisations, SHG movements have been expanded into the tribal societies and empowered poor women

by providing alternative livelihood security. The movement has been able to create interest and awareness among women to explore new patterns of livelihood. For example, SAMBANDH, an NGO is promoting the cultivation of medicinal plants in the Mayurbhanj district of Odisha. Similarly, tribal women were given trainings in soap making, mushroom cultivation, bee keeping and lac cultivation which improved the economic condition within the tribal household. The expansion of SHG movement into the tribal areas proved beneficial in consolidating the identities of tribal women as change agents and integrated them into the development process. The United Nations Development Decade (1971-9) largely focussed on the integration of tribal women's issues into the development process, planning and policy-making, which in turn led to the formation of different units or cells in the government ministries to uplift the condition of tribal women. Further, the decade of 1970s saw the emergence of consciousness across India to identify the role of tribal women in the local economy, conservation of natural resources and their participation in the local governance to understand change at the grass-root level. Let us understand the role of tribal women in various arenas of development within the help of some case studies or ethnographic narratives.

Rosemary Dzuvichu's study shows the economic empowerment of Naga women. She explained the need for gender-sensitive planning for the development of tribal women. Majority of Naga women work in the agriculture sector in spite of the fact that they do not own any land or property. As a result, they often face financial challenges to access any loan or credit for agriculture. According to Dzuvichu, banks are often unfriendly towards women, therefore they are unable to get credit facilities from the banks. Various development agencies like Nagaland Empowerment of People through Economic Development (NEPED) had helped Naga women to purchase land and other valuable resources in their name. In this regard, the formation of SHGs also have supported women to purchase land and enabled the Naga women to cultivate community land to generate income for themselves. This study emphasised the formation of the identity of Naga women and specified their new economic roles.

Political participation of Naga women is negligible and governed by the customary laws of the Naga tribe. Women were never part of the decision-making process and their roles are largely limited to making cups of tea at the Village Development Boards (VBDs). The non-participation of Naga women in the political decision-making bodies has distanced them from different developmental programmes and schemes. Although there are some Women's Organisations in the region, the members are not aware of the aspects like percentage of fund allocation for women's issues in the VBDs. The functioning pattern of these state led organisations is largely governed by the male dominated norms of the village council of the Naga Society. Recently, women representatives have made an appearance in some of the districts. For instance, in urban Dimapur region, one woman representative was elected as the council chairperson. This reflects the changing role of tribal women in the local governance structure.

It was reported that around 370 million indigenous women and men across the globe are substantially contributing for reducing the (green house gas) GHG emission by employing sustainable technologies for agriculture and biodiversity management **(Kelker).** In the context of climate change, the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) and Kyoto Protocol have indicated

the need for including communities in the climate adaptation and mitigation strategies. In the climate change debate, gender included in order to understand vulnerability and mitigation. In particular, the role of women and the power relations between women and men in the indigenous societies have emerged as the central question of climate adaptability. The experts of gender and development discourse like Govind Kelker have explored the role of Adivasi women to cope with the challenges of climate change. Adaptation and mitigation are both mutually related processes to meet climate variability. Mitigation is defined in relation to the reduction of climate vulnerability in future and adaptation is described as the coping strategies which are adopted by different communities to meet the actual or expected dangers of climate change (Lambrou and Piana 2006, Kelker). Various studies have indicated that indigenous women, in spite of living in margins, are using effective mitigation strategies to deal with climate change. In areas of Yunnan, China and Andhra Pradesh, Jharkhand, Meghalaya, Chattisgarh and Nagaland, tribal women have articulated their gender needs which will empower them to deal with climate risks. These enabling strategies are listed as follows:

- Ownership and control rights over land and livestock;
- Crop diversification;
- Extension knowledge about sustainable use of manure, pesticide and irrigation facilities;
- Flood protection shelter to save their food, fodder and seeds;
- Easy access to health care services;
- Access to affordable and collateral-free credit;
- Access to market, knowledge, capacity-building training and skills and
- Equal participation of women in the management of community resources and decision-making.

These above-mentioned adaptation strategies are articulating the demand of indigenous women for their equal rights in productive assets, community decision-making bodies and the governance structure. There are case studies which reported the differential role of indigenous women in reducing climate risks. In Costa Rica, forest land was owned by the women's groups and they continued to manage the forest sustainably. In Andhra Pradesh, groups of Adivasi women were successful in overcoming their economic barriers through the generation of biodiesel. Similarly, Naga women have started to cultivate Jatropha and Soya bean crops which enabled them to meet their household needs (refer Kelker). Adivasi women are engaged in activities such as cultivation of new crops, community-participation and management of forest products which enable them to address their economic risks and simultaneously deal with climate stress. Let us now look at the relationship between tribal women and forest. Tribal women play an important role in the forest management. Their role in generating forest economy has become part of recent academic discussions (Agarwal, 2009; Shiva, 1992). Therefore, it is important to look at the inter-relationship between women and forest in this unit to show how tribal women has been able to create agencies for managing the forest and generate livelihood to attain household food security.

16.3.2 Women and Forest

While discussing the role of tribal women in forest economy, it is important to note that women perform major part in the labour of gathering of forest produce. The study by **Fernandes and Menon** (1987) showed that in parts of Odisha and Jharkhand, women contribute 60 per cent of total family labour in gathering and around 70 per cent of their labour is devoted for collecting firewood (c.f. DN, 2012). In case of gathering, women are largely responsible for marketing the produce and the income belongs to the person who contributes the labour. In contrast there are tribes which are influenced by caste based society, it was observed that women contribute majority of labour as producer, but they do not take part in the marketing. It is significant to note that among the resource dependent communities, tribal women enjoy economic autonomy in the context of collecting Minor Forest Produce (MFP). "The needs of the Amazonian tribes are more than satisfied by the rich rain forest; their poverty begins with their destruction. The story is the same for the Gonds of Bastar in India or the Penans of Sarawak in Malaysia" (Shiva, 1988, refer DN, p. 196). Vandana Shiva argues that tribal women play a key role in the management of forest economy within the family. Citing the work of Lee and de Vore, Shiva argues that in the hunter/gatherer societies, women provided up to 80 per cent of the daily requirement of the family whereas men's contribution as hunters was insignificant. With the rise of the modern state, women's roles became limited in the context of forest management at the community decision-making level. The formation of mainstream civilisation has also subjugated the position of tribal women and degraded the cultural importance of the forest. The increasing depletion of forest and the expansion of the state control over the forest resources have negative impact on the position of tribal women. The work of **Bina Agarwal** on **Green Governance** is a good example to show the changing relationship between women and the forest. In Jharkhand, as a practice, women are normally excluded from village Panchayats which govern the forest and other common resources in the village (DN). Even though the village community plays a central role in managing the forest resources, it is observed that these communities are monopolised by the men within the family. The patriarchal ideology that men are the heads of the household is accepted by the village community. Therefore, it is essential to redefine village community to include both adult women and men so that they can be involved in the management of forests so also can strengthen their social and economic position.

There is considerable gender difference observed in the context of conservation of biodiversity. Tribal women possess extensive ecological knowledge to manage bio-diversity. Let us look at the women's role in conservation practices. This understanding will help in documenting some of the context-specific conservation practices of tribal women so that their roles can be mainstreamed and recognised in the context of natural resource management. In the Muslim tribal community of Lakshadweep, women are considered to be acquainted with the common resources around their homes, reef and shores. The social roles and position assigned to women enabled them to possess specific knowledge about the natural resources. Tribal women's 'interactive knowledge' in areas of agriculture, natural-resource management and health care is evident in some of the academic studies. Let us know look at some of studies on tribal women's access to livelihood in the context of forest resources.

Women in general and tribal women in particular have been seen as the providers of food, fuel and water by which women have been able to create a support system

for the household. Tribal women have played multifaceted roles in agriculture, weaving and food processing units and livelihood diversification by which they expanded and sustained the village economy. Under the regime of ecological imbalance, women from ethnic communities have sustained certain forms of knowledge and traditional technology.

According to **Meeta Deka** (2013), various ethnic communities such as *koch, tiwa, karbi, dimasa* and *Nepalese* tribes in *Dima Hasao* district of Assam have sustained the specific livelihood practices in agriculture and fishery. Women are seen as the practitioners of traditional technology and agents of environmental sustenance; at the same time, they are the victims of current day ecological crisis and development. When the women become the victims of development, they are eventually marginalised and relegated from the new economy. Deka argues that women in *Dima Hasao* district of Assam play a major role in maintaining human health, natural health and social health in the area. Human health emphasises the reproductive role of women, natural health implies the close association between women and nature, and social health encompasses the integral relationship between women and community.

Very often women become the victims of economic change, i.e. development. The discussion on social change needs to reflect upon the issues of tribal women's concern towards losing their traditional livelihood. The field study conducted in *Dima Hasao* revealed that the coal mining in the adjacent areas has disrupted agriculture, fishing and forestry. Traditional livelihoods of women connected to rice cultivation, vegetable gardens, hunting and grazing animals and fishing is dislocated. For instance, traditional fishing in which women are engaged is not possible in polluted water. The study suggests how essential it is for development to take account of women's contribution to economy and ecology. Bina Agarwal (2006) states that women in the tribal and peasant societies are responsible for collecting fuel, food and water and that they relate to nature in specific ways. Thus, they are more likely to be affected by environmental degradation in distinct way compared their men in the community. In this case women are seen as victims of ecological crisis and as repositors of ecological traditional knowledge. Agarwal (2006), refers to this juxtaposition as "the opposing dimensions of women as victims and women as actors" (c.f. Deka 2013).

16.3.3 Tribal Women in Alternative Roles

The new economic activities like tourism and the expansion of handicraft industry are placing tribal women in different roles. For instance, the shift of weaving from domestic activity to market oriented activity is positioning tribal women in advanced forms of labour. Women in Laos are now learning new designs and embroidery to make weaving the main source of livelihood (see DN, 2012). Women are learning new designs to cater to the market demands and the senior women in the community are bringing innovations in the designs for capacity building and setting up power looms as weaver-traders. With the new system of production, tribal women are adapting to their new identity. This has resulted in the transformation of decorative embroidery and weaving from being a subsidiary domestic activity of women into a commercial art production and even the main income source of women and their families (DN, 2012: p. 346). With the rise of the feminist movement in the West, women's invisible work in embroidery or quilt making was recognised as art. The acceptance of women's domestic form of art work as "paid art" is required in India

to mainstream tribal women's livelihood. The shift from women's art work from domestic function of women into a market-demand product could possibly bring change in perception of society towards tribal women as "women art producers".

Sumi Krishna, Wendy Harcourt and others argue that the ideas of 'mainstreaming' and 'sustainable livelihood' for tribal women must be redefined. Women need to be recognized as co-managers in forest, water and livestock management (Krishna 2012, p. 124). According to Krishna (2012), marginalisation of women, dalits and adivasis is primarily understood within the macro-development framework. Therefore, the existing knowledge base of women is unrelated with the programme intervention. Women perform daily care of livestock management; however the knowledge about animal healing practices is exclusively within the male domain. Further, ethno-medicine and the knowledge about herbs are eventually transmitted to the next generation of males while relegating women to the role of knowledge users. ANTHRA NGO challenged this patriarchal practices by reclaiming a separate space for women healers. Women from the marginalised groups were given training in veterinary practices and their own health care to retain the knowledge base of different community practices (Ramdas et.al 2004, see Krishna 2012). Similarly, tribal women are involved in the practice of natural forest management. Let us now read about women's role in community led forest management through the empirical studies.

Madhushudan Bandi's (2013) study on community management of forest resources in Andhra Pradesh showed higher participation of tribal women in the sale of non-timber forest products and the management of forest resources. At the same time, their involvement in the decision-making process and their role in the village level committees are limited. The study showed that the Vana Samrakshana Samithis (VSS) have women representation to maintain the official records, but women are not aware of their rights and are still fighting for equal wage. However, tribal women belonging to specific communities like Sugali/Lambada are vocal about the existing gender-based discriminations and have been able to articulate their rights in the public forum. Though, change is seen among the tribal women's through SHG movements and mobilisation, the question of women's agency is curtailed by menfolk of the community.

Check Your Progress 1 :

What are the alternative roles in which tribal women are engaged in contemporary India?

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16.4 TRIBAL WOMEN'S QUESTIONS ON IDENTITY & INTEREST

Addressing the question of women's identity and interests in the context of ecology is quite complex and challenging. Before we discuss identity and interest in the context

of ecology, it is essential to understand another dimension of identity, i.e., identity formation in relation to movements.

16.4.1 Women and Naxalbari Movement

Mallarika Sinha Roy (2009) states that unless the processes of formation of women's identity are kept open, it is not possible to realise women's perception about the movements, their contribution in the movement and the impact of their activism on their lives. It will be interesting to look at the examples of women in the Naxalbari movement as it has given women a different sense of their own self. The author refers to the participation of women in the Naxalbari movement as the 'magic moments' of the struggle as it has allowed women to alter the gender roles and participate in the decision-making process. Identity is defined as the construction of selfhood and it is interlinked with the social contexts. Construction of identities has provided women the scope to redefine their self and negotiate with the society. In this sense, identities are not fixed within time and space but open to interpretation. For instance, it is significant for a peasant woman to participate in ploughing activities which were never allowed to her earlier. As a woman leader of the movement, she ploughed the land which was ritually restricted for women. The transgression of gendered norms in the society was possible with the formation of an alternative identity. The author reports the narrative of a tribal woman who said that during the Naxalbari movement, a woman leader had the courage to enquire about the practice of wife beating and assign punishment accordingly. These are different ways of asserting the collective interest of women in the society and here identity is linked to social change. Let us now understand identity and interest in the context of ecology and governance.

16.4.2 Women, Resources and Governance

The gendered dependencies on forest have different implications for women and men. Accordingly, women's identity gets formed and their interest gets displaced due to social norms and state-led action. Let us now explore the interface of women with the social categories such as identity and interest analytically. Tribal women's dependence on forest resources is distinctly different from the men. This distinctiveness is a consequence of the existing gendered division of labour and gendered division of economic resources. The gendered division of labour was a source of inequality and gave women access to a certain form of knowledge system.

For instance, a study conducted in Andhra Pradesh has reported that rural women identified seventy-nine varieties of uncultivated leafy green that they gathered for food. Similarly, in Meghalaya a woman collects 10-12 varieties of herbs and plants to be used for cooking (Agarwal, 2010). The nature and extent of women's dependency on forest and Common Property Resources (CPR) provide them the scope to create a knowledge base on the local ecology and economy. The local knowledge base of tribal women is an embodiment/aspect of their identity as *knowledge bearers* in the field of ecology and conservation.

In the early 1960s, Burling (1963) found that women of Garo tribe knew about some 300 indigenous cultivated rice varieties and women in Nepal are extensively engaged in the process of seed selection (Acharya and Bennett 1981, c.f. Agarwal, 2010, p. 40). Tribal women have created an identity for themselves as bearers of indigenous/local knowledge system. They acquire this form of knowledge with age,

through social network and even marriage. **Bina Agarwal** (2010) states, "although women are by no means the sole repositories of local knowledge, there is a gender difference and gender specificity to that knowledge" (p. 40). Therefore, women's distance from accessing commons leads to the marginalisation of women's interest and creates new forms of conflict with the men of the community and the State.

The depletion of forest resources and lack of access to the commons undermine/ question the material basis of women's identity as *knowledge bearers* of natural resources. Similar consequences are faced by women when restrictions are imposed upon the community to access the forest resources. When severe restrictions were imposed on community's access to forest under the community forestry programme, it allowed for the gendered and class specific use of forest. It is important to understand the use of forest or commons in relation to gender and class as it exposed the idea of 'diversity of interests' to use and conserve forest resources (Agarwal, p. 41). For instance poor or tribal women face a serious conflict between their interest to protect/conserve the forest and their struggle to meet daily survival needs. B**ina Agarwal** discusses the notion of interest in the context of gender and class, but it can be useful to understand this as framework for future research. She explains that interest can be different along gender lines on the following three points:

- The nature of product women and men are concerned with;
- The time period in which the product needs to be obtained; and
- The gestation period for the growth of the product.

Let us take an example. Women are interested in collecting firewood and fodder therefore they may be looking for an early extraction of the forest product. On the other hand, men are interested in timber and they may not be extracting the forest products on a daily basis. There is a shared interest among women and men to protect the forest but the nature of gendered need and practice creates gender conflict on the issue of when to extract and what to extract from the forest. A similar framework can also help you to understand the relationship between tribal women's interests and their use of forest resources. Interest can bring inter-village conflict, conflict with the state and inter-gender conflict within the community. Interest of the community can equally contribute to the protection of the forest resources.

Agarwal (2010) discusses collective action as a means of protecting the shared interest of the women. She made a distinction between agitational collective action and cooperative collective action. Women's participation in the Chipko movement which you have already read in the unit on Ecofeminism in the course MWG 101 is a form of agitational collective action. It manifested women's interest and organising capacity to have greater control over the forest and protect it from destruction. Chipko movement showed how women are capable of organising struggle and engaging in the practice of conservation. The interests can be protected through cooperative collective action, i.e. women's participation in the formal system of governing the commons can enable them to engage in the process of decision-making. Tribal women's role in formal decision-making process or community- led institutions is limited, therefore it is all the more important to engage them and create institutions. The Mahila Samitis of Baghamunda, a Gond village in Odisa are protecting 500 acres of forest. The Samitis patrol the forest at night and impose fines on the violators (Singh, 2001). Similarly, Madhu Sarin (2001) reported that under the Uttarakhand government's Mahila Samakhya program, women in the Mahila Mangal Dal were

empowered enough to fight for their representation in the forest committees. In the region, two women were elected as ward members and later became the members in the forest protection samitis that enabled all the women in the village to meet the daily needs of grass, firewood and bamboo.

In the tribal community, women continue to be governed by customary laws and norms, therefore, it is difficult to generalise the position of tribal women cutting across location and region. For instance, **Nalinibala Devis's** autobiography, **Eri Aha Din Bor** (1976) appears to be the only autobiography of the colonial period and describes the identity of the Khasi women in Assam. After Nalinibala moved to Shillong she realised the significance of women's identity and she admired the sense of self-respect possessed by the Khasi women. She realised the importance of identity when a Khasi woman refused to accepted old clothes for her children which were offered by her (Devi, 1994, see Deka 2013). Identity of tribal women can not be measured on a quantitative scale, it is constructed in relation to their self and society. When we are discussing about women's identity and change, it is important to collect and read memoirs, diaries, letters, and reports which give descriptive and qualitative accounts of women's identity and agency.

According to **Virginius Xaxa** (2008), the existing data on the gender dimension of the tribal society is scattered particularly in the context of social transformation, hence the context of change for tribal women varies. What has been observed in an empirical context can be illustrative of social change for women in the tribal communities. As we have discussed in the earlier units in the Block, the identity of tribal women is constructed in conjunction with customary laws that have not enabled them to respond to certain forms of change. Tribal women's question in the context of change differs both in and outside their community.

Let us look at how their capacity to exercise agency is limited within their own community. For instance, according to the tribal law, the land is owned by the lineage and not by individual families. This being the practice, women's rights and control over their land has rarely been articulated by the women (Xaxa, 2008). Even though there has been a trend towards formation of private property in the tribal societies, the question about women's right and ownership over land is still governed by customary practices. This shows that the wider process of social change is not necessarily responding to women's agency.

Ravindran and Mohapatra's (2009) work on the tribal women of Southern Odisha outlined some of the gender inequalities which are prevalent in the tribal societies. They identify the following:

- Lack of ownership over land and other economic resources;
- Limited access to forest;
- Degradation of the economic status among the tribal women;
- Increasing evidence of social evils and domestic violence within the tribal community

In spite of having such forms of discrimination, tribal women in different communities have been successful in addressing some of their strategic and practical gender needs including enjoying political empowerment, getting access to livelihood and food security, participating in the conservation of biodiversity and reclaiming the

women's knowledge system. On the other hand, tribal women's questions with regard to gender inequalities within the community, their conflict with the state agencies, and access to forest resources need proper articulation within and outside the community.

You can read recent research works on Adivasi communities, development and social change in https://publications.azimpremjiuniversity.edu.in/5173/1/WP%2025_Working-Paper-Series_Issue-25.pdf.

The degrees of freedom and nature of liberty vary from region to region. According to R.S. Rana (1996), tribal Bhotia women enjoy greater autonomy and freedom compared to the Brahmin and Rajput women in the Garhwali region. The author argues that Bhotia women's decision-making power in the family domain has enabled them to create an identity of their own. For instance, women have achieved name in mountaineering. In Jaunsar-Bhawar region, women in general enjoy greater sense of liberty as the region has a large tribal population. It shows that issues of identity and interest are different for women across tribes and contexts. For instance, the larger process of transformation in the agricultural sector from shifting cultivation to cash crop cultivation has negatively impacted poor farmers and particularly the women. The promotion of plantation and rice cultivation are depriving poor and the women from their access to land and marginalising their traditional practices. To cite the work of **Brigitte Leduc and Dhurpad Choudhury** (2012) among the matrilineal societies of Khasis and Garos, such trends in agricultural practices may lead to transformation of common property resources into de facto private land holdings which will affect the women. Therefore, the most systematic way of approaching this subject is through documenting case studies, carrying out ethnographic studies and engaging tribal women in the process of gender training.

Check Your Progress 2:

Define "interest" in the context of women's acess to resources in the tribal economy.

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16.5 LET US SUM UP

The unit discussed the intricate linkage between tribal women, identity and interest in the context of access to resources, political empowerment and food security. You will be able to understand how tribal women engage with the process of social change which is localised in nature. Their engagement in the change process can be described as their everyday struggle for survival. The unit explores different areas including climate change and biodiversity management in which tribal women have been engaging as change agents. It raises certain important issues and questions that need to be addressed in the contemporary conceptualisation of change.

16.6 UNIT END QUESTIONS

Q.1 Define identity and discuss the significance of identity formation for the tribal women.

Q.2 How does identity and interest relate to the process of social change? Give case studies and examples of tribal women in India to substantiate the answer.

Q.3 What are the challenges faced by the tribal women in organising control over the forest resources?

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