

Health, Development & Human Rights

Women's Agency & Overpopulation

As you read the material for our next class, keep the questions below in mind. To answer these questions you will have to reflect critically on what you have read and possibly re-read important passages. Keep in mind that there are two basic kinds of information that you need to look for in the readings:

1. What are the main points or conclusions that an author accepts with respect to a particular issue?
2. What are the reasons, important considerations, and evidence that lead the author to accept that conclusion?

For our purposes, *it is information of the second sort that will be our primary concern* since our most basic task is to *evaluate the reasons and evidence* that are offered to support accepting one possible conclusion about an issue, rather than another.

Although I strongly suggest that you write out brief answers to these questions, you do not have to turn in written responses. You do, however, need to be prepared to speak intelligently about these issues at our next class meeting.

Readings

- Amartya Sen, "Women's Agency and Social Change" & "Population, Food and Freedom".

Questions

1. In "Women's Agency and Social Change", Amartya Sen argues that expanding women's agency is a more worthy goal than simply addressing women's well-being and welfare. What is the difference between agency and well-being? What reasons does Sen provide for a focus on agency over well-being?
2. On page 210 of "Population, Food and Freedom", Sen presents three questions concerning coercive solutions to tragedies in the commons. What are these three questions and how does he answer each of them with respect to overpopulation? How does this account differ from Hardin's? Who has the more convincing position?
3. These articles are from Sen's book, *Development as Freedom*. Based on your answers to the previous questions, how does greater freedom encourage or otherwise reach development goals?