Community Ownership to end Violence against Women (VAW)
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Violence against Women (VAW) endangers not only individuals but communities as a whole. Current solutions offered to victims of violence are insufficient as they are fundamentally symptomatic treatments, such as the provision of women crisis centres/shelter homes. The shelter homes and/crisis centres act as external support systems for the intended beneficiaries whereby women affected by violence are merely being shifted from one “location” to another, which leads to them living displaced lives. The issues are thus not solved because what needs to be addressed still remains intact which is the mindset of those that perpetrated crimes of violence against them in the first place. The solution lies in educating the local communities that are responsible for those women being violated in the first instance and changing their perceptions and values with regard to the status of women in our society.

Although a sustainable solution to end VAW is a debate that still continues amongst scholars and activists for women rights, it is an accepted fact that sustainability of a policy is directly linked to its alliance with the indigenous culture. It is only through a ‘community ownership technique,’ that sustainable solutions to reduce VAW can be provided. Community ownership to end VAW leads to cost effective development interventions –feasible for both national and global public institutions to sustain in the longer run. Community ownership involves the role of social capital such as men, women, formal and informal institutes and influential organisations at the grass roots level.

The questions that this panel will put forward are:

How can the potential of social capital at the grass roots be streamlined to achieve a sustainable solution to end VAW?

How can the role of formal institutes like the police be strengthened and accounted for, to operate as a catalyst in preventing women from suffering violence, through community ownership?

How can positive masculinities be engaged at the community level to reduce gender antagonism and end VAW through community ownership to end VAW?