**COMMENTS**

**COVID-19 Pandemic is not a war!**

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***Abstract***

*War imagery is widely used to explain COVID 19 response,  a public health crisis snowballed into a national calamity. This commentary critiques the use of “war” metaphor in describing the response to COVID19 Pandemic and referring the health care workers responding to the challenges of the pandemic as warriors. It is conceptually wrong and incorrect as it glorifies war-machinery. ‘Do not harm’ is the slogan on health care workers, comparing them with the soldiers who are trained kill and maim has no logic behind it. The war metaphor also often justifies violence against the people made vulnerable by the pandemic.  Covid-19  should not be an excuse to justify the stigmatization of a people made further vulnerable by a pandemic.*

*Keywords:- Covid-19,  war metaphor, medical ethics, pandemic & stigma*

COVID-19 Pandemic It is a global health emergency snowballed into a humanitarian crisis. Addressing the challenges of COVID-19 Pandemic is not a war. The health care workers who are dealing with the Pandemic are not warriors. The COVID-19 Pandemic is an extraordinarily complex challenge that demands extraordinary cooperation, partnership and Ingenuity. However, many leaders have used the metaphor of War to describe the intensity of the pandemic

"This war needs a war-time plan to fight it."[[1]](#footnote-1)

The country is at war with an invisible, elusive enemy, and the measures were unprecedented, but circumstances demanded them [[2]](#footnote-2)

'we near the end of our historic battle with the invisible enemy'. [[3]](#footnote-3)

Covid-19: We are in the midst of a war[[4]](#footnote-4)

The logic and rationale in using the war analogy to describe, analyse, or to address the challenges of a pandemic is questionable. It distorts the value of the contribution of health care workers.

The health care providers who are providing care, treatment and ensuring the well being of millions, do deserve a better metaphor to describe their contribution to save lives and to analyse the Pandemic.

The values of War is about aggression, plunder, control and domination. Combat kills and maims. War is the most destructive and merciless of all human activities

Compassion, kindness, brotherhood, justice are the values guiding our efforts to cope with the Pandemic.

Soldiers are trained to kill and destroy, take life away from others, and breach one of the most fundamental moral values of their society, do not kill. Health care workers- Nurses, doctors, community health workers are trained to save lives. 'Do not harm' is the motto of health care workers.

The use of the language of War, encourage violence against the persons infected and affected by COVID-19, justifies stigma and discrimination against the most vulnerable persons in the Pandemic,

Though, today in a civilised world, there are tools and institutions to deal with such disagreements. Use of strategic diplomacy and the use of UN systems are an example.

COVID-19 Pandemic questions about some of our fundamental assumptions about the way of life. Perhaps, the most potent message brings out the COVID19 Pandemic is the futility of war machinery.

Globally, (30 May 2020), there have been 5,819,962 confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 362,786 deaths, reported to WHO.[[5]](#footnote-5)

"The fury of the virus illustrates the folly of war" observed António Guterres the ninth Secretary-General of the United Nations. The most vulnerable — women and children, people with disabilities, the marginalised and the displaced — pay the highest price. He called for an immediate global ceasefire in all corners of the world.[[6]](#footnote-6)

In many places, health care workers are struggling to access essential, relatively inexpensive personal protection equipment and ' ventilators' to save human lives.

If human security cannot be assured by the current defence doctrine, one needs to take a closer look at the role of this institution.

As an alternative to the current defence ideology with exclusively focuses on the security of the state, we should shift our focus on human security, national and international security that gives primacy to human beings and complex social and economic challenges such as COVID-19 Pandemic they face on a day to day basis.

In most developing countries, the national budgets will be forced to reflect the changed perception of the need to ensure human security. There should be massive investment in expanding the role of nurses and community health workers, ambulance services, fire and public safety services, including the services of the sanitation workers.

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1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
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