WEAPONS USED BY INDIAN ARMY IN KARGIL CONFLICT

On the completion of 20 years of Kargil war, the country is greeting the brave soldiers who made the supreme sacrifice. The soldiers of the Indian Army, showing indomitable valor and tactics, dusted the Pakistani Army. But we know very little about the weapons which brought the Pakistan Army to its knees.

The Indian Army detected the intrusions between May 3 and May 12, 1999. Strategic planning for operations was carried out by the Indian Army from May 15 to May 25, 1999. Such activities included military operations, troops movement, artillery and other equipment were moved in and the necessary equipment was also purchased from friendly countries. On May 26, 1999, Indian Army carried out offensive action named Operation VIJAY to evict the Pakistani intruders.

Indian troops moved towards Pakistani occupied positions with air cover provided by aircraft and helicopters. However, 1AF was ordered not to cross the LOC as India did not want to enlarge the scope of war. A joint Infantry-Artillery battle with air cover was launched on regular Pakistani soldiers of the Northern Light Infantry (NLI) who occupied high altitude mountain peaks and ridgelines. Indian troops deployed firepower that could destroy the intruders. About, 250 artillery guns fired on enemy positions to clear the infiltrators. The Bofors FH-77B field howitzer played a vital role in this operation. An innovative tactics was employment for Artillery firepower in battle. A massive exchange of fire broke out between the two groups. Three hundred Artillery guns, mortars and rocket launchers fired approximately 5000 shells, rockets and bombs on a daily basis at the enemy.

Indian army used the 155 mm Bofors medium guns and 105 mm guns and prevented the enemy from interfering with the assault. The Arillery fire was so devastating that the Army captured Tiger Hill and Point 4875 on July 5, Mashkoh Valley on July 7, 1999. The Indian Army renamed the Point 4875 as “Gun Hill” in honour of the stupendous performance of the Gunners in the Drass and Mashkoh sub-sectors. Tiger Hill was bombed with high explosives which caused large-scale death and devastation and the Indian Artillery fired their 122 mm Grad multi-barrel rocket launchers (MBRLs). These were employed in the direct firing role audaciously without regard for personal safety. Even such incidents of the guns firing were telecast in full view of TV cameras and the nation watched in rapt attention for the first time in history of independent India.

The Pinaka Multi Barrel Rocket Launcher caused the most damage to the infantry of the enemy during the Kargil War. This system mounted on trucks has been made by DRDO. One unit of this system consists of 12 rockets which fire in 44 seconds. Its Mark-1 and Mark-2 have a range of 40 kms while the Mark-3 has a range of 65 kms.

During the Kargil war, the Indian Army used the INSAS rifle to put the enemy to death. However, during the war, there were complaints of jamming of this rifle, magazine breakage and reduced range. The full name of INSAS is Indian New Small Arms System. This Indian rifle has been made by the Ordnance Factory. Recently, the Indian Army has ordered the AK-203 rifle, which will replace the INSAS.

The AK-47 rifle of the AK series was used for the close combat of the Indian Army. The Indian Army has been using this rifle for a long time. In the Kargil war, this rifle performed tremendously even in high altitude areas. It can fire 600 rounds in a minute.

SAF Carbine 2A1 is the silent version of the sub machine gun 1A1. In which the silencer is fitted in the barrel. It is made by the Ordnance Factory in Kanpur. It is a light weight weapon and is capable of automatic firing. It can fire at a rate of 150 rounds per minute.

Dragunove sniper rifle made in Soviet Russia was used during the Cold War. A cartridge of 7.62×54mm is used in this rifle. In this, a magazine box of 10 rounds is used. The effective range of this rifle is considered to be 800 to 900 meters.

During the Kargil War, the Indian Army destroyed several enemy bunkers with the Swedish Corl Gustav Rocket Launcher. This rocket launcher has been manufactured by the Ordnance Factory Board under Transfer of Technology from Sweden.

This Soviet-made machine gun has been manufactured at the Ordnance Factory Tiruchirappalli of the Ordnance Factories Board.

The Indian Army uses the Semi Automatic Pistol Auto 9mm 1A. Apart from this, CRPF, state police also use this weapon. Generally 13 round magazines are used in this. It is produced under license at Rifle Factory Isapore.

In the Batalik sector despite heavy casualties the Artillery OPs were established on dominating heights. Another victory was added when Indian forces recaptured Point 5203 and Khalubar on 21 June and July 6 respectively. With the effective use of artillery guns by India, the Pakistani forces started suffering casualties and their moral went down. Firepower played a significant role in weakening the Pakistani defences, destroying its battalion and headquarters and mainly the logistics supplies. In the Kargil war the Indian troops fired over 250, 000 shells, bombs and rockets, i.e. 5,000 shells, mortar bombs and rockets daily.

CHM Amit Saha
Reg No. WB19/SDA/156007
Basirhat College
48 Bengal Bn NCC