

UPSC Civil Services Examination

UPSC Notes [GS-I]

Topic: British Policy of Subsidiary Alliance [Modern Indian History Notes for UPSC]

Subsidiary Alliance was basically a treaty between the British East India Company and the Indian princely states, by virtue of which the Indian kingdoms lost their sovereignty to the English. It also was a major process that led to the building of the British Empire in India. It was framed by Lord Wellesley, the Governor-General of India from 1798 to 1805. It was actually used for the first time by the French Governor-General Marquis Dupleix.

The Nawab of Awadh was the first ruler to enter into the subsidiary alliance with the British after the Battle of Buxar. However, The Nizam of Hyderabad was the first to accept a well-framed subsidiary alliance.

The subsidiary alliance is an important topic for the UPSC [civil services exam](#). These NCERT notes will also be useful for other competitive exams like banking PO, SSC, IAS exams and so on.

Features of the Subsidiary Alliance Treaty

- The subsidiary alliance in India was planned by Lord Wellesley but this term was introduced by French Governor Dupleix
- An Indian ruler entering into Subsidiary Alliance with the British had to dissolve his own armed forces and accept British forces in his territory.
- He also had to pay for the British army's maintenance. If he failed to make the payment, a portion of his territory would be taken away and ceded to the British.
- In return, the British would protect the Indian state against any foreign attack or internal revolt.
- The British promised non-interference in internal affairs of the Indian state but this was rarely kept.
- The Indian state could not enter into any alliance with any other foreign power.
- He could also not employ any other foreign nationals other than Englishmen in his service. And, if he were employing any, on the signing of the alliance, he had to terminate them from his service. The idea was to curb the influence of the French.
- The Indian state could also not enter into any political connection with another Indian state without British approval.
- The Indian ruler, thus, lost all powers in respect of foreign affairs and the military.
- He virtually lost all his independence and became a British 'protectorate'.
- A British Resident was also stationed in the Indian Court.

Effects of the Subsidiary Alliance

- As a result of Indian rulers disbanding their armies, many people were rendered unemployed.
- Many Indian states lost their independence and slowly, most parts of India were coming under British control.

- The Nizam of Hyderabad was the first to accept the Subsidiary Alliance in 1798.
- Lord Clive also introduced the subsidiary system in Oudh and the Treaty of Allahabad was signed where the British promised the Oudh territory from enemies like Marathas.

Order in which the Indian States entered into Subsidiary Alliances

1. Hyderabad (1798)
2. Mysore (1799 – After Tipu Sultan was defeated in the Fourth Anglo-Mysore War)
3. Tanjore (1799)
4. Awadh (1801)
5. Peshwa (Marathas) (1802)
6. Scindia (Marathas) (1803)
7. Gaekwad (Marathas) (1803)

