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**1. Evaluate the role of women in spearheading social reform and participating in the nationalist struggle. Substantiate your answer with historical examples.**

**Introduction:** The colonial period witnessed Indian women stepping into public roles despite societal restrictions. Their contributions in both reform and nationalist movements reflect a pivotal shift in gender roles and societal consciousness.

**Women in Social Reform Movements:**

1. **Savitribai Phule:** First Indian woman teacher; ran schools for girls and Dalits with Jyotiba Phule. Faced casteist and patriarchal resistance.
2. **Pandita Ramabai:** Advocate for upper-caste widow rights; founded Arya Mahila Samaj and translated religious texts into Marathi.
3. **Annie Besant:** Launched Central Hindu College; through the Theosophical Society, advocated for women's dignity and self-rule.
4. **Begum Rokeya:** Founded Sakhawat Memorial School for Muslim girls in Kolkata; wrote *Sultana's Dream* envisioning a feminist utopia.

**Women in Nationalist Movements:**

- **Sarojini Naidu:** First Indian woman INC President; known as "Nightingale of India"; part of Salt Satyagraha.
- **Kasturba Gandhi:** Led grassroots campaigns and inspired women to join national movements.
- **Aruna Asaf Ali:** Became a symbol of resistance in Quit India Movement; edited *Inquilab* journal.
- **Bhikaji Cama:** Operated from exile in Europe; advocated Indian independence globally.
- **Kalpana Dutta & Preetilata Waddedar:** Participated in Chittagong uprising; examples of armed revolutionary leadership.

**Critical Evaluation:**

- Women created parallel discourses of emancipation within the nationalist framework.
- Their participation led to formation of **All India Women's Conference** (1927), a precursor to gender policy debates.
- In vernacular regions, women educators spread reformist ideas using local languages and informal community-based schooling.
- Underrepresented in official records, but their activism catalysed women's constitutional rights.

**Conclusion:** Women were not mere participants but ideological torchbearers of reform and nationalism. Their legacy shaped India's inclusive democracy and continues to inspire modern gender justice efforts.

**2. Analyse the nature of socio-religious reform movements within the Muslim community during the 19th century. Highlight the specific contributions of Sir Syed Ahmed Khan towards modern education and upliftment of Indian Muslims.**

**Introduction:** Post-1857, the Muslim community faced a leadership vacuum, colonial suspicion, and socio-educational marginalisation. Reform movements arose seeking a balance between Islamic tradition and modernity.

### Key Reform Movements:

1. **Aligarh Movement:** Sir Syed's pragmatic approach focused on modern education and British cooperation.
2. **Deoband Movement:** Orthodox and anti-British; emphasised Islamic purity, Arabic learning, and religious authority.
3. **Barelvi Movement:** Emphasised devotional practices, Sufi saints, and preserving Indian Islamic traditions.
4. **Ahmadiyya Movement:** Founded by Mirza Ghulam Ahmad; controversial but promoted rational interpretation of Islam.

### Sir Syed Ahmed Khan's Contributions:

- **MAO College (1875):** Became AMU in 1920; inspired by Oxford-Cambridge.
- **Scientific Society (1864):** Published Western works in Urdu; founded *Tehzib-ul-Akhlaq* journal.
- **Advocated loyalty to British:** Believed political cooperation was necessary for Muslim upliftment.
- **Opposed extremist ideologies:** Rejected jihadist interpretations and called for communal harmony.
- **Modernist Interpretation:** He encouraged reinterpretation of Islamic teachings in light of modern science and reason.

### Critical Insight:

- Faced resistance from Ulemas who saw Westernisation as religious dilution.
- His ideas indirectly contributed to Muslim separatism, but also to integration of Muslims into Indian governance.
- Promoted rational Islam and built a secular Muslim middle class.
- His intellectual approach influenced later thinkers like Mohammad Iqbal and institutions like the Muslim League.

**Conclusion:** Sir Syed was the architect of Muslim modernism in India. His legacy is visible in AMU's alumni who shaped politics, administration, and culture. His work exemplified a reform rooted in pragmatism, pluralism, and intellectual empowerment.