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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 Ulema 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.