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Q. Critically analyze the role of religion reformers....?

Introduction:

The advent of Islam in the subcontinent is a unique feature of the world as it brought an introduction between Arab Muslims and Indians. This introduction led towards formation of Indo-Muslim civilisations that brought many changes all over the world. It was a gradual process. According to Quaid-i-Azam,

"Pakistan came into being the day the first Indian nationalist embraced Islam".

However, in 19th century Indian Muslims found themselves in deep crisis. The fall of the Mughal Empire and the failure of the 1857 War of Independence marked the political, economic and educational decline of the Muslim community. In this era of decline, a series of religious and educational reform movements emerged to restore the identity of Muslim community. Reformers such as, Shah Wali Ullah,

Syed Ahmad Barelvi, Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and others played a crucial role in the revival of Muslim nationalism.

Sir Shah Waliullah: The Pioneer of Islamic Revival

Although Sir Shah Waliullah lived in the 18th century, his influence extended deeply into the 19th century and shaped later reform movements. He was the first to translate the Holy Quran into Persian to reconnect Muslims with their faith. He worked for the unity of Muslims and stressed the utility of Quranic translation in his famous book

Fuz-ul-Harain. He tried to

discard the path of extremism and introduced a balanced approach between the four schools of thought and for

what his book **M-Insag fi**

Bayan Sahab al-Ikhtlaf inspired

later generations of reformers,

including the leaders of

the Jihad Movement, the founders

of Deoband seminary and

the modernists of Aligarh.

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Syed Ahmad Barelvi and
Shah Ismail Shaheed:

The Jihad Movement:

Syed Ahmad Barelvi and Shah Ismail Shaheed were extremely dismayed to see the decline of Muslims in their religious and ideological commitments. They desired to see the restoration of the supremacy of Islam in the Indian subcontinent. Deeply disturbed by the moral decay of Muslims and the domination of Sikh rulers in Punjab and Frontier regions, they sought to establish a state governed by Islamic law.

~~Although the Jihad Movement was not successful~~ In one of his

letters to Shah Mahmood Shah Syed Ahmad Shaheed reflects his strong feelings, he said

"To uphold Jihad and to crush rebellion, ~~it~~ has been the cardinal commandment of God, particularly, at such a time when the criminal acts of non-believers have gone to such an extent."

Although, their military struggle was not successful in overthrowing Sikh rule

in Punjab, it had a significant impact on the mindset of Muslims. The Jihad Movement rekindled the ideas of self-reliance, courage, and resistance among Muslims.

The Deoband Movement

After the War of Independence (1857), many Muslim scholars realized that armed conflict and armed resistance against the British was futile. Instead, they turned their attention to preserving Islamic learning and moral values. In 1867, Maulana Qasim Nanotwi and Rashid Ahmad Gangohi founded the Darul Uloom Deoband in Saharanpur.

The movement aimed to protect the spiritual and intellectual heritage of Islam by providing religious education. Deobandi scholars rejected Western education and urged Muslims to resist cultural assimilation. Later leaders like Maulana Husain Ahmad also played a political role in anti-colonial movements such as the Khilafat and Non-Cooperation movements.

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Sir Syed Ahmad Khan and Aligarh Movement

The most transformative reform movement of the 19th century was led by Sir Syed Ahmad Khan. After the War of Independence (1857) he concluded that Muslims had to embrace modern education and cooperate with British. He believed that the ignorance of modern education and the hostility towards the British is the root cause of Muslim decline. He established Muhammadan Anglo-Oriental College at Aligarh in 1875, later evolved into Aligarh Muslim University. He sought to remove the animosity which had arisen between Muslims and the British. To further promote education he founded Scientific Society. Sir Syed's efforts were beyond education. His political writings, especially after the Hindu demand for representative institutions later developed into the Two-Nation Theory. The Aligarh Movement was not only modernized Muslim education but also revived a sense of political identity among Muslims of the Sub-continent.

Nadwat-ul-Ulama: Bridging Tradition and Modernity

To reconcile the divide between traditionalists and modernists, the Nadwat-ul-Ulama was established in Lucknow in 1894 by scholars such as **Mawlana Shibli Nanani**. The movement sought to synthesise the best aspects of traditional Islamic learning and modern education. Nadwa encouraged awareness of modern sciences along with the study of Islamic sciences. Founders of Nadwa believed that Muslims can not afford to isolate themselves from the modern world. To fulfill this purpose Nadwa acted as a bridge between the Deoband and Aligarh schools of thought.

Contribution of Religious Reformers in the Formation of Muslim Identity

The long lasting legacy of these reforms was the formation of a distinct Muslim identity in the Indian subcontinent. Through the combined intellectual, educational, and religious efforts of Muslim reformers. Movements like Aligarh movement and the Muhammadan Educational conference prepared the ground for the establishment of All India Muslim League in 1906. Thus, by the end of the 19th century, Muslims had regained their self-confidence and began to view themselves as a distinct nation within India. The Urdu language became a symbol of the identity. All these developments laid the ideological foundation of the Two-Nation Theory, which later guided the Pakistan Movement.

Conclusion.

The religious reformers of the 19th century were the true architects of Muslim revival in India. Emerging from the ruins of political defeat, they restored confidence among the Muslim community. Whether through Shah Wali Ullah's intellectual reform, Sir

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syed Ahmad Khan's educational vision, Deoband's religious scholarship each movement contributed uniquely to the shaping of Muslim consciousness. Through socio-political awakening ~~they~~ they inspired and laid the ideological and institutional foundation of the creation of Pakistan in 1947.