In his *Leviathan*, Hobbes said that every man was enemy of every other man. There was no hope; therefore that man could ever achieve peaceful and constructive self-government. Since this was the case, he argued, man should agree to the establishment of a government that would be unlimited in its power and authority and responsible to no one. It seems incredible that a person could thus use his enormous intellectual gifts to deprecate the intellectual capacities of mankind. But we have witnessed enough of this in our own day to that it is entirely possible. We have seen the so-called intellectual giants register votes of no confidence in the human race. We have seen them use all their powers in the interest of preserving the status-quo, even when it meant untold human misery and suffering. And we have reluctantly reached the inescapable conclusion that the intellectual resource is not always a power for good in the affairs of men.  

The quote above highlights the fact that Black intellectuals during the extremely-charged 1960s were becoming increasingly dissatisfied with all the politics that sought to preserve the status quo. This dissatisfaction led to conflict and struggle, and this thesis attempts an exploration of this not just within the American context, but also in the Indian one. Despite establishment of democratic state structures in both countries—presidential form of government in one and parliamentary in the other— it has been seen that a section of society in one has remained disadvantaged and has faced extreme forms of discrimination. This thesis takes up the case study of two such sections—the Dalits and the Blacks, who were arguably amongst the most disenfranchised and disadvantaged groups anywhere in the world, and faced oppression based on a circumstance as irrational as the accident of birth.

Despite the scale of the problem, these issues have been relatively neglected; a comparative study of the struggles of these two most marginalised communities has never been attempted systematically. This thesis seeks to fill this lacuna and tries to draw parallels as well as contrasts between the modes of struggle and patterns of oppression in two different contexts. The first and foremost question that this study seeks to engage with is whether ‘Blacks’ and ‘Dalits’ are comparable categories at all. Since the juxtaposition of ‘race’ and ‘caste’ has always remained a matter of serious debate within academic circles, a

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comparison has been attempted at the level of discrimination and social-exclusion that both American Blacks and Indian Dalits face.

The concepts of 'protest-movement', 'social-justice' are very important in this context and therefore to this thesis in general, but these concepts are primarily related to the discipline of Political Science. The obvious question that arises is whether this theme can be related to International Relations and Area Studies as well. However, we have shown in this thesis that these conceptual categories cannot remain limited to any particular discipline and can be applied to other areas as well and in this sense, we have adopted an inter-disciplinary approach. The cross-geographical comparisons we have attempted between America and India, especially when it comes to the question of literature, have also enabled us to further strengthen this approach, which is also reflected in the chapter plan of the thesis.

Chapter-I, for example, introduces the context and legitimacy of the comparison between the two societies and highlights/exposes the reality of caste and race. This chapter also includes a brief survey of the extant literature on these subjects and introduces the hypothesis as well as the research questions. Chapter-II examines the case of discrimination based on the issues of race and caste. This has been done using the large volume of Black and Dalit Literature. A section of this chapter looks at the historical genesis of racism in the United States and casteism in India.

Chapter III makes a comparative analysis of Blacks and Dalits demanding civil rights in the context of the segregation prevalent in their respective societies. This chapter also looks at Ambedkar's politics and the influence of his American sojourn on this; Martin Luther King’s trip to the land of Gandhi is analysed similarly. A section of this chapter attempts to explore the manner in which religion becomes inseparable from politics and it also explores whether religion per se is a 'false ideology' or a useful strategy.
Chapter-IV studies the rhetoric of guns employed by the Black Panthers and others. It examines the views of ideologues of violence, which includes Robert F. Williams, Frantz Fanon, Malcolm X and Stokely Carmichael. It critically discusses the ideology of Black Power and the formation of Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. The Black Panthers’ march with guns at the State Assembly in Sacramento and the movement for freeing Huey P. Newton also form important sections of this chapter. A part of this chapter has studied the ideology of revolutionary internationalism, which guided the Panthers to some extent. Finally, this chapter has tried to study the gender-question as it was dealt with within the party and draws the contours of gender perspectives as reflected in the writings of Fanon, Cleaver and Dhasal.

A group of young and radical Dalit poets, taking inspirations from the Black Panthers, formed the Dalit Panthers. The renowned writer V. S. Naipaul, in his *India: A Million Mutinies Now* wrote of them in the following words:

I had heard, vaguely some years before, of the Dalit Panthers. I had got to know little of them beyond the name, which had been borrowed from the Black Panthers of the United States. It was a romantic borrowing; it encouraged the-too simple-belief that the Dalits (or scheduled castes or harijans or untouchables, to take the wounding nomenclature back through its earlier stages) were in India what Black people were in the United States.  

Chapter-V begins with the critical exploration of this borrowing and examines the self-definition of Dalit Panthers as expounded in their manifestoes. Two significant events in the life of the short-lived Dalit Panthers include the Worli-Riots of Bombay and the Marathwada-Riots following the renaming of Marathwada University, and they form important parts of this chapter. The most crucial section of this chapter examines the question of Caste and the role of the Indian Left in redressing the issue.

The thesis, however, goes beyond these local issues and also looks at the attempts to internationalise the question of Dalit and Black struggle. The Durban

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Conference, for example, was the first attempt at raising the question of caste at an international forum; Chapter-VI has tried to look into the debate generated around this, and also examines the proceedings of World Conference Against Racism at Durban and the Durban Review Conference held in 2009 at Geneva. Affirmative Action and Reservation Policy as a tool to do away with the socio-economic injustices have also been evaluated in this chapter. Chapter-VII makes some concluding remarks on the study.

Some important terms and concepts which have been used throughout this study need clarification. As this thesis seeks to make a comparative study between 'Blacks' and 'Dalits', these two terms will be used quite often throughout the work. Historically, Blacks were denoted as Negro or Nigger. However, with growing Black assertion, they began to be called by the less offensive epithet of 'Coloured-People'. The use of the term 'Black' during the subsequent period signifies a feeling of pride and assertion in the identity and emerged out of the slogans of 'Black Power' and 'Black is beautiful'. In recent times, a relatively more politically correct term in usage is Afro-American and is used interchangeably with Blacks in specific contexts.

The term Dalit is also under constant scrutiny and many scholars see it as being loaded with a feeling of antagonism not just against the upper castes, but also against various sections of the scheduled castes themselves. Yet, there is a broad consensus on usage of the term Dalit. It may sound surprising to many, but a large population of scheduled castes are still not aware of the term Dalit and feel comfortable being called 'Harijans'. These castes have been traditionally seen as Shudras and Atishudras, but British officials began to employ the politically correct term 'Depressed-Classes' for them. With the Government of India Act of 1935, they were recognised as 'Scheduled-Castes'. Recently, the Supreme Court of India also gave a ruling against the official usage of term 'Dalit', and a recent controversy has been generated about the division within scheduled castes with the usage of the term 'Maha-Dalit' by the Bihar State Government.
A final clarification must be made about the repetitive usage of the term 'Caste-Hindus' in Dalit academic circles. This term has a specific context. It is true that the Hindu society has always refused to include the lowest castes within its folds, and that a majority of the scheduled castes barring those who have converted to Buddhism, Sikhism or Christianity, still practise Hindu customs. Even in a state like Maharashtra, caste like Chamars consider themselves to be in the fold of Hinduism. The use of the term Caste-Hindus therefore breeds confusion and hence it has been replaced by 'upper-castes' in this thesis.