

An analysis of the magazine Wartha -

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1. Introduction

1.1. The 'Malayali Community' in Germany

Überhaupt, die indischen Christen in Deutschland gehören zu den wenigen Ausländergruppen in Deutschland, die niemals für den Rechts- und Sozialstaat eine Belastung waren.(Wartha 1997, No.2, 14)¹

Largely unknown both in and outside Germany there exists in Germany a small but rather well organised community of Indian Christians from Kerala.² While it has its roots, like most of the other ethnic minorities in Germany, in work migration, its history exhibits many specific features. First of all it was not young single males who came to Germany in the 60s, but rather groups of young women.

In the time of the German economic miracle in the 60s there was a general lack of employees in the economy which was felt also in the health sector. The shortage of physicians and nurses was such that the situation was considered a *Pflegenotstand*³ and sources for qualified personnel were sought. Germany, in order to alleviate the problem, entered into recruitment contracts for nurses with South Korea and the Philippines. But this did not satisfy the demand for labour and thus, as many hospitals were run by the Catholic Church, the latter looked for further places of recruitment. They found one in the Indian state of Kerala which has a large Christian population. From among this a few thousand trained nurses, nuns and unqualified young women (aged between 16 years and the mid twenties) were taken under contract and brought to Germany. Those who were already trained started to work immediately, the others got a training as nurses⁴. Generally the young women were well taken care of, the hospitals provided logging, some language training and leisure programmes. In some cases, however, the young women were badly exploited and promises as well as parts of the contracts were not kept. This as well as the nurses' home sickness and unfamiliarity with the German environment triggered the establishment of welfare programmes by Christian organisations. Thus taken care of the young Indian women helped in closing the gap in the German health system, became well liked nurses and were able to financially support their families in Kerala who consequently experienced some upward social mobility.

With increasing adaptation to the German environment some of the nurses started having German boyfriends, mostly from among their colleagues in the hospitals, and a few hundred eventually married German men. The majority of the young women, nonetheless, had an arranged marriage with, due to their ability to pay a good dowry, well qualified and 'suitable' Indians in Kerala. Subsequent family formation in Germany was, however, rather difficult. While the Indian spouses of the nurses had a right of residence there, they were faced with a waiting period of several years for a work permit. This led to different reactions - some couples either returned to India or migrated to another country, others split geographically with the wife staying in Germany and the husband searching for a job elsewhere, and finally

¹ „Anyway, the Indian Christians in Germany belong to the few groups of foreigners in Germany who have never been a burden for the constitutional and welfare state.“ (own translation)

² Goel (1998) gives a general overview of the South Asian presence in Germany and places the Malayali community within it. Malayali is the term commonly used to refer to the Keralite people as their mother tongue is Malayalam.

³ This can be translated as a state of emergency in medical services.

⁴ This training was naturally adapted to the needs of the German health system and did not include, for example, tropical medicine.

some husbands stayed with their wives without working. The latter, however, was not very satisfying to them, in particular as they were rather well educated and had not expected this change of gender roles. It seems that hardly any of the men opted for using the enforced waiting period to become further qualified professionally, they rather formed cultural and sport clubs, and thus spend their time playing theatre or volleyball. Once they then had the possibility of getting an employment, most had to be content with a position which was below their original qualification. Many started to work in the hospitals where their wives were employed already.

Those who stayed in Germany, despite the efforts of the German authorities to make them leave the country at the end of the 70s⁵, thus raised families there. Some few families sent their children to Kerala for education, others attempted a return to India in order for their children to be brought up in an Indian environment⁶, but most of the children were brought up in a German environment, attending the German education system and thus developed norms and forms of action alien to their parents. By now many of this children have left school, most of them have entered higher education and the first are founding families of their own.

The Malayali community by now has established itself securely in the middle class of German society. The adults are integrated in the work force and earn sufficiently to provide their children with a good education, to afford a comfortable home as well as to provide for their family in India. The children are at least averagely successful in education, much more so than children from other ethnic minorities. They feel at home in Germany, hardly experience crude racism and have friends and also partners from the white German majority. While for their parents this is true also to some extent, the latter also very much cultivate the social relationships within the Malayali community. Both the churches and all kinds of societies and clubs provide them with a meeting place and refuge from the German environment. It is interesting to see that in this social sphere in contrast with the professional sphere the men are in charge. This might be a compensation for their lower status in economic terms to their wives or it might reflect the fact that many of the organisations were founded to provide the unemployed husband with some engagement. But the Malayalis do not totally stay within their own circles, to some degree they also mix with other established Indians⁷, who have founded much less ethnic minority organisations, but are largely in charge of the biggest Indian society in Germany, the Indo-German Society in which also many Malayalis are members. Meetings of the latter thus occasionally take the form of multi-faith and multi-cultural gatherings. This seeming transgression of internal divisions appears, however, to succeed only partially. Within the Malayali community itself there seem to be fierce conflicts among the different church affiliations.

The members of the Malayali community appear to derive much pride out of the fact that they pursue an employment in which they care for other people as well as from their own economic and their children's educational success. They are eager to emphasise their difference to other less integrated ethnic minorities as the Turkish community and in particular to the growing number of, among others South Asian, asylum seekers.

⁵ See Goel (1998) for more detail on this.

⁶ See Punnamparambil (1980) for a failed attempt.

⁷ For a discussion of this group see Goel (1998). The distinction between established Indians and asylum seekers is taken from Desai (1993).

1.2. The state of research 1998

To my knowledge no research on the Malayali community in Germany has been published. In publications of the journalist Jose Punnamparambil⁸ one finds references to some aspects of this ethnic minority but he has not written about it in a systematic manner. Similarly references to the Malayalis are made in Goel (1998), but without a special focus on this community. The best written source for research are thus the several magazines published in Germany for the Keralite nurses and their families, such as *Wartha*, *Ente Lokam* and *Meine Welt*. Most of these were founded in the 70s and 80s by church bodies in order to cater for the needs of the Malayali community. The church organisations provide the finances and the editorial teams are comprised of Indians from within the community. These magazines thus reflect to some extent what is happening within that group. They do this, however, in very different manners. *Meine Welt* seems to have left the focus on purely Malayali concerns, deals extensively with cultural issues and is appreciated by a wide circle of intellectuals. *Wartha*, on the other hand, seems to be more popular among the Keralites, providing much coverage of community matters.

The aim of this essay is thus to approach an analysis of the Malayali community and their attitudes through an analysis of the magazine *Wartha*, which seems to have most popular appeal within the former. The basis of the discussion are a rather arbitrary collection of past issues beginning in 1991 and going up to the last issue of 1997.⁹ These are put into context by the scanty literature on the topic, former interviews which I held with members of the Malayali community on other topics and my personal knowledge of several Keralese of different ages and in different environments.

Adding to the fact that I have no access to all the past issues of *Wartha* and that it thus is almost impossible to make statements about clear trends, there is a further fact which poses problems to the analysis. This is that the magazine is multi-lingual, including always a large share of Malayalam texts which I cannot read. I, however, benefited of a translation of a sample of titles and got some clues about the contents from an analysis of the accompanying illustrations. This seems to indicate that the kind of topics covered are similar to those covered in German and English, with maybe some bias towards more Indian topics, especially towards articles about movies and actresses. I thus assume that an inclusion of an analysis of the Malayalam texts would not considerably alter the conclusions. This, however, remains for somebody else to investigate. In any case, even if there were considerable differences, the following analysis will make some sense as it analyses the image given towards all readers of the magazine who are unable to read Malayalam such as most members of the second generation, the German husbands of the nurses, interested Germans and non-Malayali Indians. In fact, it might be quite interesting to investigate whether there is a considerable difference between the views expressed in the different languages.

Before any further analysis of the magazine, however, can be made it is first of all necessary to describe the concept and content of *Wartha* which will be done in the following section. Once this is completed major features of the magazine which give some indication of the nature of the Malayali community in Germany can be investigated and then a brief

⁸ See, for example, Punnamparambil (1995).

⁹ The choice of issues has been made by the editor who send me the copies and I do not know what influenced his selection. The issues in my possession are Vol. 9 (1991), No. 3, Vol. 10 (1992), No. 1, Vol. 11 (1993), No. 1 and 3, Vol. 12 (1994), No. 1, Vol. 13 (1995), No. 1, 2 and 3, Vol. 14 (1996), No. 1 and 2, Vol. 15 (1997), No. 1, 2, 3 and 4. The number of issues per year does not seem to be fixed, but probably never exceeds four.

preliminary discussion of these will be offered. During all this it must be kept in mind that this essay is a first attempt of analysis and is not considered as a final word but rather as an invitation for discussion.

2. The magazine Wartha

2.1. The concept of Wartha

The publisher of *Wartha* is the *Diözesanbildungswerk Münster*, i.e. the institution for education of the diocese Münster in northern Germany. It also employs the responsible editor of the magazine Dr. Mathew Mandapathil who is their *Ausländerreferent*, i.e. who is in charge of dealing with issues dealing with foreigners or as one would say outside of Germany with ethnic minority issues. It seems that from 1982 to 1996 Mandapathil was on his own editing *Wartha*, writing short articles himself, collecting material from others and then somehow making a magazine of these elements. With the first issue of 1996, however, an apparent change can be perceived in *Wartha*. From that issue on there is an editorial team comprising of the white German director of the *Diözesanbildungswerk* who is responsible for general advice and support as well as for the layout, one of the nurses who is supposed to deal with women's issues and an editor in India who is working in a project supported by *Wartha*. Furthermore, beginning with the second number of 1997 a spiritual advisor has been included in the team. In the same year also *Wartha* opened a regional office on the premises of the Indian project *Vidya Bhavan* and increased its editorial team there.

The title *Wartha*, which means news, is supplemented by a subtitle which was in the time from 1991¹⁰ to 1993 *Nachrichten aus Indien*, i.e. news from India. It then briefly changed in 1994 to *Nachrichtendienst für Inder in Deutschland*, i.e. news service for Indians in Germany, and ever since 1995 it has been *Nachrichten für Inder in Deutschland*, i.e. news for Indians in Germany. The new title while encompassing the first one illustrates that news of interest to the Malayali community have their origin not only in India but potentially also in Germany. This seems to capture more adequately than the former subtitle the philosophy of *Wartha* as described in No.1, Vol.10, pp.2-3. The editor perceives this magazine to be an important link and mouthpiece for the Indian community in Germany. He states that it on purpose differs from both publications by NGOs who in his view concentrate on 'problems' and on those by government agencies who only want to sell the official point of view. One of the major concerns of *Wartha* is the perceived lacking emotional link of the second generation to their parents' country of origin, the one-sided image of India they are confronted with in the German media and the assumed resulting identity crisis on their part. The editor wants to contribute in strengthening the self-confidence of the second generation, wants to impart Indian norms and traditions to them and thus hopes to provide some aid in their orientation. Adding to this it is clearly stated that *Wartha* is also the magazine for the participants of education programmes of the *Diözesanbildungswerk* and as such sees its task also in reporting on events and making advertisement for them. In fact it seems as if most of the 1,200 copies of *Wartha* which are published of each issue are sent, free of cost, to former participants of seminars for the Malayali community.

As has already been said *Wartha* is a multi-lingual magazine with articles in German, Malayalam and English. There does not seem to be a stable relation between the shares of the individual languages, but in general between half and three quarters of the issue is in German,

¹⁰ As the first issue I have got is from 1991, I cannot make any comments on earlier subtitles.

between a quarter and a half is in Malayalam and less than one in ten articles is in English. Before the change in concept in 1996 it seems that the majority of the own editorial work was done in German, while Malayalam and English texts always appeared whenever a press clipping of that origin was included in the magazine. One major exception to this rule was a series of English articles on the Malayali churches which seems to have been written directly for *Wartha*. In this case probably the author did not know German. Since 1996 this pattern has somewhat changed with more articles being directly written in Malayalam.

Before the change of concept *Wartha*, which is printed by the *Diözesanbildungswerk* itself, makes the impression of a low quality school magazine. It is dominated by photos, press clippings, other sort of documents as well as articles submitted by readers and advertisement for seminars and trips organised by the publisher. All this is somehow assembled into a magazine and supplemented by short comments and articles in between. The issues make the impression of a picture book which tries to make sure that as many readers as possible find their face at least once in it and that all press articles which appeared about any member of the Malayali community are included. The enlargement of the editorial team in 1996 alters this to some degree. There now seems to be more time and effort allocated to actually plan and layout the magazine as well as to write articles which are longer than a few sentences. Thus the face of *Wartha* has gone somewhat away from an arbitrary assortment of texts and photos although still press clippings and pictures are included.

2.2. Whose views are represented in *Wartha*

At this stage it is necessary to discuss another problem involved with describing the Malayali community in Germany by analysing the magazine *Wartha*. Even if it is conceived as the mouthpiece of the community this does not mean that its contents necessarily accurately reflect the life and the opinions of its members, even ignoring the fact that the individual members will have differing ideas and that there is not really a homogenous well-defined Malayali community. Everything that is written has gone through several filters before it is published. The two most important are the editor's personal views and the structural restrictions put on the magazine by outside forces. The latter are given in particular by the interest of the *Diözesanbildungswerk* and its financier who are all outsiders to the Malayali community. On the one hand they will make sure that the contents of *Wartha* do not contradict any of their own beliefs, that they will include a considerable share on religious issues, that events organised by this organisation will be sufficiently represented, etc. On the other hand they might want to make sure that the circle of readers appears not too restricted. It, for example, is interesting to note that *Wartha* almost always talks of the Indian rather than of the Malayali community thus trying to convey a broader field of interest than the contents actually reflect. Furthermore, the editor is employed as *Ausländerreferent* although he seems to work only for the Malayali community and there is no indication that he, for example, has any time to address issues of interest to the Turkish minority or to those of asylum seekers. While *Wartha* and the seminars organised seem to cater only for a small self-contained group of people, some efforts seem to be made to hide this focus to outsiders. Adding to these restrictions comes the personality of the responsible editor. The image of him reflected in *Wartha* indicates that he considers himself as a major authority concerning the Malayali community who is in close contact with all kinds of VIPs and is in a position to give paternal advice to others. This dominant character certainly determines the image of the Malayali community conveyed and thus will necessarily have introduced some bias. Nonetheless, the magazine can be considered to give some insights into the community life or at least its ideal

type. If this was not true, there would not be such a large loyal readership which contributes articles and praising letters to the editor.

This essay thus does not claim that an analysis of *Wartha* will give an accurate reflection of the Malayali community in Germany. It can only give an idea of how one (large) part of this community likes itself to be portrayed and make some tentative interpretations about it on this basis.

2.3. The major event in the 'Malayali community' - The Kerala Meela

Wartha is only one of the offers made by the *Diözesanbildungswerk* to the Malayali community. In its conference centre in the small town of Hopsten several regular seminars are held for the Malayalis, organised either by the *Diözesanbildungswerk* itself or by one of the many Keralite societies. Hopsten is thus today a well known place within the community and a reference to it implies images of a meeting place of all German Malayalis. The seminars are organised for a wide range of topics reaching from religion to sports, dealing with mechanisms to deal with stress to meetings for bi-cultural families. The central event, however, seems to be the annual *Kerala Meela* in the summer holidays.

As far as the extensive coverage of the *Kerala Meela* in *Wartha* indicates this seminar came into existence as participants of earlier weekend seminars had proposed to have once each year an intensive seminar together with the children in which one can deal with ones own history, origin, culture, identity and future. Thus one year after the creation of the magazine the first *Kerala Meela* took place in 1983. In the first four years there was one one week long seminar per year, this was increased to two seminars per year in 1987 and 1988. From 1989 to 1995 there was a further increase to three annual seminars which seem to have been always fully booked leading to several hundred participants. An attempt to reduce the number of seminars to two in 1996 was futile as participants demanded a third one. From 1997 onwards, however, it is planned to only have one yearly seminar as it is believed that the considerable change in the family structure within the Malayali community, this probably refers to the advanced age of the children who no longer unquestioningly follow their parents to any event, does not give scope for more.

Especially the early issues of *Wartha* allocate a lot of their space to advertisement for the next *Kerala Meelas* - in almost 100% of the cases using a large portrait of a 'traditional' and charming Indian woman - and reports of the past one. The latter consist primarily of photos from the seminar showing people taking part in discussions or performing in something, mainly classical Indian dance. Accompanying these illustrations there is hardly any text but a lot of slogans like „Heimweh und Sehnsucht“, „Harmonie und Toleranz“ or „Gekonnt und entzückend“¹¹. The general impressions conveyed is that a Kerala Meela makes you experience all the nice things from back home thus satisfying your longing, gives your children the possibility to learn about these so that the negative image they get through the German media is compensated, that one can be oneself in Hopsten and flee the strenuous world outside. Advertisement phrases like

Freunde kennenlernen - Heimatliche Küche kennenlernen - Eigene Geschichte kennenlernen - Eigene Herkunft kennenlernen - Sich selbst entdecken - Eigenes Land entdecken - Eigene Kultur entdecken - Eigene Identität entdecken - Einfach Zeit haben - Den Alltag vergessen - Zur Besinnung kommen - Sich vom Streß

¹¹ These translate as homesickness and longing, harmony and tolerance, and accomplished and delightful.

erholen - Muße und Ruhe haben - Beten und meditieren (1993, No. 3, 10, 12, 14)¹²

illustrate this. This impression is further supported by a look at one of the recent seminar programmes which shows that the main features of a *Kerala Meela* are classes on Indian music and dance for parents and children separately, Malayalam classes for children and discussion groups for parents to deal with problems of child rearing, conflicts in the family, planning of the future etc. This is complemented by religious gatherings, lectures on a special topic, leisure programmes and general discussions. Furthermore, it seems as if the organisers always put some effort into inviting some famous personalities from Kerala, in particular actors and actresses, and that a major part of the cultural programme is carried out by artists of the second generation.

2.4. Pattern of contents

Advertisement for and reports about the *Kerala Meela* can take up to half the content of an individual issue of *Wartha*. This shows how important the editor considers this event and how much readers are willing to be confronted by it. Adding to this each issue will have some few general articles about India, mostly about films and politics. Each issue also contains information about temperatures in different Indian towns, the rates of exchange and some commodity prices, which seem to have in particular nostalgic value. There is hardly any general reference to German issues and also topics concerning ethnic minorities in general are very seldomly raised. The major focus of *Wartha* is on the German Malayalis, not on their problems but on their successes. So besides the reports on the *Kerala Meela* there will be descriptions of all kinds of other events, references to the nurses' contribution to the German health system, to cultural and other achievements, to engagements in developing Kerala and to the fabulously successful second generation. All this contributions are very personalised, praising the people involved rather than giving information about what actually was done. Furthermore, there are discussions of religious issues, the editor gives paternal advice about living in Germany and the magazine is used to publicise family events. In a few cases the editor also comments on high politics in the same paternal manner as he does on community events.

The Malayali articles seem, as has already been mentioned, to focus on the same topics. In the earlier issues there was a bias towards things happening in India - either film or German Malayalis going there -, but since the change in concept in 1996 many of the articles deal actually with community events in Germany. This is less true for the English texts as these are mainly press clippings dealing mostly with important people from Kerala, such as Arundathi Roy, with general Indian issues or with Indians in the UK or in the USA.

Everything is illustrated richly with photos where a high proportion of these actually depict the ideal Indian woman.

¹² „Get to know friends - get to know the cuisine of back home - get to know your own history - get to know your own origins - discover yourself - discover your own country - discover your own identity - just have time - forget the everyday routine - come back to your senses - relax from stress - have leisure and calmness - pray and meditate“ (own translation)

3. An analysis of the contents

3.1. *Pan-Indian claim*

It has already been mentioned that one of the strange aspects about *Wartha* is that it is called ‘news for *Indians* in Germany’ as well as the repeated claim by the editor that the magazine is the mouthpiece of the *Indian* community, while the contents and the form of presentation, in particular the use of Malayalam and the focus on Christianity, clearly indicate that the real target group are only the Malayalis and their families. As earlier mentioned this could be explained by some outside constraints which make it necessary to fake a more general audience in order to make the allocation of finances justifiable. If this was the only reason, however, there would be no necessity to go beyond some statements in the aim of the magazine and in its title, then general references to Indians, when actually only Malayalis are meant, would not be necessary within the articles. But if one looks closely at *Wartha* one sees that almost always either the term Indians or Indian Christians is used and thus in some form a claim for pan-Indianness is made. Reading the magazine one gets the impression that Malayalis are the only Indians in Germany, one hears almost nothing of the other established Indians and even less of the numerous asylum seekers. Malayalis are the proper representatives of India and India is more or less shrunk to Kerala. This view seems to be also conveyed whenever, as is presented to happen often, the Malayalis in Germany approach an Indian politician about the grievances of the Indians in Germany.

This image that is created, on the one hand, increases the importance of Kerala and takes it out of its marginal position in India, on the other hand, it constructs an idea of homogeneity and importance for the Malayalis in Germany. By repeatedly being told so, the migrants will believe this construction and can thus convey it also to interested Germans who have little knowledge of India and Indians in Germany. Furthermore, the identification of Kerala with India is passed on to the second generation. They grow up believing that the whole of India is like Kerala and are quite shocked when this image is destroyed by an outsider.¹³

3.2. *Image of India*

One major concern of most Indians in Germany is the image, or rather parts of the image, of their country of origin created in the German media and prevalent in public opinion. This is one of a poverty ridden country with lots of sick people in slums, starving because they are not eating the sacred cow and at the same time maltreating their wives and the untouchables. This misery is, however, made lighter by the spiritual character of the Indians, their peacefulness and acceptance of their destiny as personalised in Mahatma Gandhi and Mother Theresa. It is the equating of India with poverty and backward social practices that the Indians in Germany reject and to this they react by emphasising the achievements of a modern but traditional India. Exactly this aim seems also to be underlying the concept of *Wartha*, which in particular for the benefit of the second generation strives to paint a ‘realistic’ positive image of their parents’ home country, rather than joining in the NGOs approach of dealing only with problems. Thus one repeatedly finds references to the greatest democracy of the world, to the tolerance as exemplified by the Indian constitution, to a rich cultural heritage and economic progress.

¹³ A friend of mine earned much disbelieve when she described the heterogeneity of India to a seminar of second generation Malayalis.

At the same time, however, as parts of the German stereotype of India are tried to be refuted other parts are, probably without conscious effort, strengthened. On the one hand the editor repeatedly takes a superior position when commenting on Indian ‘stupidities’ such as the renaming of Indian cities and thus both anticipates a typical ‘German’ reaction as well as giving an idea of the superiority of Western over Indian reasoning. On the other hand the positive features of the presented positive image of India very much resemble the positive German stereotypes of India. The manner in which the Malayali community in Germany is described in *Wartha* and also the pictures used present an exotic image of a peaceful people retaining their traditions and thus being superior to the German material world. This picture is put together through the press clippings of German newspapers which have titles like „Geheimnisse der schwarzen Augen“ or „Zauber des Tempeltanzes“¹⁴, by the own usage of phrases like

Nicht nur die erste Generation, sondern auch die Mädchen, die in Deutschland geboren sind, entdecken den traditionellen Sari als interessante und exotische Kleidung der Frauen. (1995, No. 3, 28)¹⁵

and in particular by the amount of pictures in any issue of *Wartha* which show a ‘traditional’ cheerful Indian women. Most of these emphasises on the exoticness of Indianness do not naturally follow the course of the topic, but are rather added deliberately in order to create just this picture. It seems that the magazine must not only assure the Germans of these achievements of India but also and in particular the Malayali community itself. The constant use of the picture of the traditional Indian woman makes only sense if one considers it as standing for the ideal of traditional India. It certainly is not very representative for the Malayali women in Germany in her everyday life, as a picture illustrating that would show a nurse working hard in a hospital.

This mirroring and internalising of German stereotypes, as long as one considers them positive, seems to be very successful. The Malayali community seems to believe in them and as the following quote shows they also successfully encourage them among Germans.

Die Fröhlichkeit und Gelassenheit der Menschen trotz großer Armut und Probleme waren für die meisten der Besucher aus Deutschland überraschend. (1996, No. 1, 26)¹⁶

While believing to oppose the German categorisation of India and Indians, the Malayali community, in fact, seems to be adopting just those and to act from within them.

3.3. The ‘Malayali Community’

The extensive coverage of the Malayali community in *Wartha* basically moves along two strands of images. On the one hand the achievements of members of the community are praised, on the other hand it is emphasised how much unrewarded sacrifice the nurses have born for Germany. It is stated how they have faced toil and frustration for the benefit of sick people and how nobody takes account of this.

¹⁴ These translate as: Secrets of the black eyes or Magic of the temple dance.

¹⁵ „Not only the first generation but also the girls who were born in Germany discover the traditional sari as an interesting and exotic dress for women.“ (own translation)

¹⁶ „The happiness and calmness of the people, in spite of their great poverty and problems, was surprising for most of the visitors from Germany.“ (own translation)

Genau vor 30 Jahren wurden die ersten Krankenpflegeschülerinnen von Kerala nach Deutschland geholt, um die Personalnot zu lindern. Viele dieser Mädchen leben heute mit ihren Familien in verschiedenen Städten der Republik von Behörden und der Öffentlichkeit ignoriert und vergessen. Sie sind alleingelassen mit ihren Familien und Problemen. Schlimm genug, daß sie auf der Straße als „Asylanten“ angesehen werden. Eine bittere Erfahrung nach 30 Jahren Dienst an den Kranken und alten Menschen dieser Gesellschaft. (1991, No. 3, 1)¹⁷

By this kind of accounts *Wartha* creates an image of martyrdom for a good cause. The argument is not that the Malayalis should be treated better in Germany, because they are human beings but because they are ‘good’ people. They should not be confused with the other or rather the real foreigners, who are a burden for the state and the society. Malayalis are something different, they are a benefit for Germany. Thus it is important, also for strengthening the own self-esteem, to emphasise all the achievements of members of the community and *Wartha* is the place for this. As already mentioned it is full with praises of the successes of individual Malayalis. Mostly these are in fields related to community issues such as sports and culture, but if there is a press clipping about another field of success it is also included. Thus, for example, an article is included about a Malayali woman who is active in an *Ausländerbeirat*¹⁸ (1995, No. 1, 50). It seems that she is mentioned in *Wartha* not so much because there is an interest in her work, as otherwise there could be more coverage of this kind of issue, but because she is the head of the committee. One gets the impression that one of the main aims of the magazine is to show the community’s, and the editor’s, proximity to the famous and powerful. In fact, any actor, artist or politician who comes from India, in particular naturally from Kerala, seems to be contacted and invited to some event in order for an inclusion of a picture with him or her in the next issue of *Wartha*.

The kind of image presented of the Malayali community in *Wartha* seems to indicate that its members’ main aim is to gain recognition in the German society. For this purpose they emphasise their difference from the unwanted foreigners, their belonging to the German middle class and their achievements. As *Wartha* is hardly read by majority Germans this image cannot be constructed so much for them as for the community itself, so that its members gain the self-confidence to live according to it and to present it to the outside world.

3.4. The Second Generation

As mentioned at the beginning one major aim pursued by publishing *Wartha* and organising the *Kerala Meelas* is to cater for the perceived needs of the second generation and thus it is not surprising that it is omnipresent in virtually all issues. The topic dealt with are again twofold, dealing on the one hand with the perceived identity problems created by growing up in Germany and on the other hand it are again all kinds of achievements which find a prominent place in the magazine.

¹⁷ „Exactly 30 years ago the trainee nurses from Kerala were called, in order to alleviate the staff emergency. Many of these girls live today with their families in different towns of the republic, ignored and forgotten by the authorities and the public. They are left alone with their families and their problems. Bad enough that on the street they are considered ‘Asylanten’. [Asylanten is a derogatory term for asylum seekers.] A bitter experience after 30 years of service for the sick and old people of this society.“ (own translation)

¹⁸ A municipal committee of non-German residents responsible for monitoring the issues concerning foreigners in that municipality. - It is interesting to note that this politically active woman is not a nurse.

It seems that parents bring any success of their children to the notice of *Wartha* and that the editor is willing to publish basically every press clipping send to him. The major part of these report extra-ordinary achievements in the field of Indian classical dance, many pages with numerous illustrations are dedicated to document these, especially so as the German press seems to eagerly report on these exotic performances. The large number of promising young dancers suggests that many parents from early on put a lot of effort, time and money into their daughters' (and in a few cases also son's) dance education, that this is one of the done things in the Malayali community. The question to be raised then is whether it is really a success of the child or rather, at least to a large extent, one of the ambitions of the parents. *Wartha* certainly hardly ever forgets to mention also the happy mother and father as well as the latter's own artistic skill. But it is not only young dancers, who are covered by the magazine, whoever from the second generation is able to enter the press somehow or gets some kind of price will be praised. Given the gained publicity it is not important whether the achievement has been reached in something 'traditionally Indian' or not. There was, for example, an extensive coverage of a young boy in the town of Cologne, who successfully entered the highest circle of a local custom by becoming *Kinderkarnevalsprinz*¹⁹ and thus showed that his parent's managed to get integrated in the local middle class. Academic success, as it is generally less illustrious, does not attain the same interest in *Wartha*, but will nonetheless be mentioned such as in the case of a student who got a price for developing a traffic concept. For the success of a sports team to be mentioned it is sufficient that one of its members belongs to the Malayali community and one can bring many more such examples. The fact that only the success is of interest and that there, in most cases, is no real interest in the field in which it was achieved is best illustrated by the following article which accompanies an illustration of a smiling young Indian boy holding a bowl in front of a village scene:

Ein bekanntes Gesicht auf dem diesjährigen Misereor-Plakat!

Die Fastenaktion der deutschen Bischöfe für die Entwicklungsaufgaben in der „Dritten Welt“ ist angelaufen. An sich nichts besonderes, wenn nicht dieses süße, fröhliche Gesicht des Jungen auf dem Poster nicht wäre! Dieser Junge heißt Niko Puthusserry aus Brühl, der uns allen gut bekannt ist. Er ist oft Gast bei den Kerala Tagungen in Hopsten und erfreut mit seinen musikalischen Darbietungen (Violine) die Zuschauer immer wieder.

Niko Puthusserry ist Schüler der 2. Klasse der Sankt Francis Schule in Brühl. Misereor suchte in einem „Wettbewerb“, an dem viele Kinder teilnahmen, Niko für diese Spendenaktion aus. Niko ist zweiter Sohn von Jose und Mary Puthusserry, die regelmäßig mit großem Engagement an unseren Veranstaltungen mitwirken. (1996, No.1, 11)²⁰

¹⁹ The German Rhineland has a long tradition of celebrating carnival, in fact much of the social life of towns like Cologne is shaped by all the customs surrounding this festival. *Karnevalsprinz* is one of the major positions one can hold within this and there is also a version for children. As this is a local tradition it is a domain which hardly any member of the ethnic minorities enters.

²⁰ „A well known face on this year's poster of Misereor [a German church NGO]

The German bishops' lent campaign for development projects in the 'Third World' has started. At first thought nothing special, if it was not for the cute and happy face of the boy on the poster! This boy's name is Niko Puthusserry from Brühl whom we all know well. He is often a guest at the Kerala meetings in Hopsten and again and again pleases the audience with his musical performances (violine).

The attention focuses on Niko's success in a competition, on his and his parents link to the community and on his musical talents. The topic of the poster is not discussed at all and this although in a different context just this poster could give rise to much resentment in the Malayali community as it uses the stereotypes of hunger and poverty in order to collect money. But in this case the pride about the success of a member of the community neutralises the concern for the image of their country of origin. This absolute focus on the person rather than on the issue is characteristic for all reports on successes of the second generation. Not the children and what they do is important, but the recognition they earn for their parents and the community.

The parents are, however, not only interested in their children's achievements, they are also deeply concerned with what they perceive as the second generation's identity crisis. The migrants believe that being brought up in an alien environment the children loose the link to their roots and thus to their parents' norms and values. The second generation is Germanised, lacks orientation in life and thus needs help and guidance. The latter is offered in the form of information about India and its customs, in particular during the *Kerala Meelas*. The seminars, furthermore, give the parents the possibility to discuss their perception of their children's problems and give the second generation the opportunity to voice their opinion in front of all participants. According to what I have been told about the seminars in Hopsten they, however, do not provide an atmosphere where the children would dare to openly talk about their views, in particular when they challenge the beliefs of the migrant generation. In fact, such an openness must always be difficult when the own parents and all their friends are in the audience and thus there is an emotional tension, where any criticism is likely to be taken personally and a detached discussion of the issue is impossible. It is, thus, not very likely that the parents will really get an accurate impression of the second generation's own evaluation of its 'problems'. Especially so as most of the latter's members are very skilled in living two lives, one known to their parents adhering sufficiently to the norms of the community and another outside of the home using to differing degrees the freedoms of the German society. All the references to the second generation's identity crisis in *Wartha* thus much more reflect the fears of the parents than the actual problems.

Accordingly, while there seems to be much concern for the second generation in *Wartha*, on a closer look it seems rather hollow as it is not embedded in a process of communication. All the coverage, in fact, gives more insight into the parents' view of things and their identity problems than into those of their children.

3.5. *Missing issues*

The analysis so far has discussed the images of the Malayali community in Germany created in *Wartha*. If one considers what kind of pictures other community magazines, such as *Meine Welt*, present to the public or what issues are discussed in the bigger German ethnic minority groups, as for example the Turkish, it becomes apparent that *Wartha's* presentation has some major gaps. Some of these will be discussed in the following.

First of all, it has to be repeated that the majority of articles in *Wartha* focus on describing a person's involvement in an issue rather than the issue itself. There seems to be little interest in discussing topics as such, with the definite exception of religion on which there are very often

Niko Puthusserry is a pupil of the second form in the Sankt Francis school in Brühl. Misereor selected Niko in a 'competition', in which many children participated, for this collection campaign. Niko is the second son of Jose and Mary Puthusserry who regularly participate with great commitment in our events." (own translation)

in-depth articles, which shows how important Christianity is for the community. The occasional more discursive article on some other topics is not sufficient to alter the overall impression. The lack, for example, of a discussion about the play a Malayali theatre is performing and what intentions the actors pursue with it, rather than a mere mentioning of it being really successful illustrates that for the community it is not so important what is done as that something is done. Community spirit is created, by for example extensively reporting on the *Kerala Meelas* focusing on showing the people who were there rather than the topics they discussed, and this gives some security for all its members, recognition is awarded and this reassures the people. Living in a still strange environment in which the individual is unsure about his or her own role and status it seems to be more important to be seen as an appreciated individual who is part of a bigger group than to convey some abstract idea.

Secondly, there is a virtual absence of everything that is not closely related to *Wartha* and things that are not representing the Malayali community in their pure form. The focus on events organised by the *Diözesanbildungswerk* is to some degree understandable as it is clearly stated that the magazine is among other things a forum for making advertisement for the own work and this stands in the way of reporting on potential competitors. Thus the Indo-German Society and its events do not figure at all in *Wartha*, although many Malayalis are actively involved in it. Even though, however, this might be considered legitimate it leads to a biased view of the Malayali community being conveyed by the magazine. It, furthermore, gives the reader the impression that the nurses and their families are the only Indians in Germany. Whoever has only *Wartha* as a source of information and does not question its pan-Indian claim will be irritated to know that although the Malayalis form the best organised community they only form a small part of the Indian population in Germany. This is true not only for German readers but also for the Malayali readers who can imagine themselves to be, if not the sole, than at least the most important representatives of their country of origin in their host country. Nothing can challenge the created image and nothing should. That is may be also the reason why although there is an extensive coverage of every *Kerala Meela* and there is much advertisement for the seminars for bi-cultural families there is hardly ever a report about any of these. It might be that although the community sees the need for such specialised meetings, it does not want to have this heterogeneity in itself be emphasised too much. The image of homogeneity and belonging has to be kept.

Thirdly, there is a definite lack of everyday life in *Wartha*. The reference to the sacrifice for the benefit of the sick and old is made, but it is not discussed how this actually manifests itself. Passing references to frustration and stress are made, but these are not taken up as an issue of interest to the whole community. There are many pictures of women in saris performing classical dances but not one of a nurse doing her work. There can be two explanations for this. On the one hand the aim can be to create a positive image of happy people embedded in their culture and too much references to the problems of everyday life might destroy this. On the other hand the reason might be that there is a Malayali community only in the private sphere. In the public, in particular, at work the nurses try to assimilate, attempt to be as German as possible. In private, however, they are longing for their Indianness. To some extent they live it in their private homes and families by, for example, cooking Indian food or watching Malayali films. But given the pressures of everyday life the German environment can, nonetheless, enter into their family sphere. Only in the presence of other Malayalis it is thus possible to feel really a Malayali, it needs the mutual confirmation of this fact. Accordingly, it makes sense that *Wartha* concentrates on that aspect of life and almost totally ignores the public predominantly German sphere.

Finally, the scanty treatment of ethnic minority issues is striking. There is once in a while an explanation of a change in law or a discussion of some multicultural topic, but this is negligible considering that during the 90s xenophobia in Germany got much publicity and was widely discussed with many ethnic minority groups formulating demands. All this is as good as absent in *Wartha*, there is only the occasional complaint that the Malayalis are not treated as good as they should be and that it is not fair to be regarded the same as other foreigners. In fact, there seems to be no solidarity with other ethnic minorities, all efforts seem to be focused on pleasing the majority. In order to do this it seems *Wartha* is despite everything trying to deny the own otherness, negating that Malayalis are after all perceived as foreigners in Germany and thus face many of the discriminations faced by others, especially the more hidden and structural discriminations. For themselves and for the Germans *Wartha* is constructing the picture of the well integrated community which does not have to deal with ethnic minority issues as it is not affected by them.

4. Discussion

In this last section I will attempt to put the analysis of *Wartha* and the Malayali community in a theoretical framework using Jenkins (1994)²¹. He argues that ethnicity is transactional in nature (198) which means that it is neither static nor defined uniformly. In his view, there is an interaction of two processes, of the process of internal definition by the ethnic group itself and the process of external definition by outsiders. The distinction of both definitions is primarily analytical as only at the meeting of them (social) identity is created. (198-199) To illustrate the differences between internal and external definitions further Jenkins introduces the distinction between groups which are internally defined with its members perceiving themselves as having a common identity and categorisations which are defined from the outside and put together people who might not consider themselves as having anything in common (200). Public image and self image are thus initially in most cases not the same. The latter is the way in which we see ourselves and in which we want others to see us. As the self is not well-defined but rather can be assembled from a wide range of components, the self image presented will depend on the social situation, in particular so as one can only successfully create an image of oneself if it is validated by others. (204) This means that the self image will be adjusted to categorisation by others, especially so if they are in a dominant position (206). Such an internalisation of external categorising can have many reasons. Firstly, in the simplest case it can be that internal and external definition coincide. Secondly, as a result of persistent non-conflictual interaction of groups and the permeability of ethnic boundaries cultural change in this manner will take place naturally. Thirdly, people might perceive the outsider who makes the categorisation to have a legitimate authority and thus they will conform to it. Fourthly, if there is a lack of acceptance a categorisation can be forced on people by a powerful authority. And finally, the categorised who object to the external definition paradoxically internalise in order to fight it. (216-217)

Such an interaction between internal and external definition seems to be at work also in the case of the Malayali community. The nurses and their families perceive themselves to come from a country with a rich culture which in their view has more to offer than the German one. Furthermore, they see themselves as having contributed much to the German society, especially so as they came to the country to help out in a state of emergency in the health sector and ever since have cared for the most vulnerable of the society. Accordingly, the

²¹ References to this work will give the page number only.

members of the Malayali community regard themselves on the one hand as deserving middle class status and recognition, and on the other hand as having the right to retain their traditions. This internal definition, however, is challenged by several external categorisations. Firstly, the state defines all those members of the community who have not adopted the German citizenship as foreigners who have only restricted civil rights and who are seen to have retained their prime loyalty, and thus belonging, to their country of origin. Secondly, the majority of the media categorises all ethnic minorities as having come to Germany in order to improve their own welfare rather than as contributing to an increase in society's standard of living. Furthermore, the media construct the already discussed image of a backward but spiritual India. These categorisations, finally, strengthen the general public's identification of colour and visibly differing culture with alienness and non-belonging to Germany.

The Malayali community is thus confronted with a public image which puts them in the same category as all other ethnic minorities and is the basis for a sense of superiority and rejection on the side of the German majority. This clearly conflicts with the community's self image and thus leads to some insecurity about the own identity and one's role in society. Out of this situation of lacking security the categorisation is fought not by questioning its general validity but by attempting to show that it is misapplied in this particular case. It is internalised and tackled from within by emphasising all those parts which can be used in favour of the community, such as showing that all the positive associations Germans have with India are part of their identity, and trying to disprove the negative attributions such as the backwardness of India, the idea of Malayalis being like all the other foreigners a burden to the society and unsuccessful in achieving anything. The strategy is thus threefold, distancing the community from other ethnic minorities, assimilating to core German values and showing the worth of the own culture. In order to successfully pursue this it is necessary for the individual to be backed by others who are in the same situation and thus community spirit is so important. In this situation also the process of detachment from the culture of the parents on the side of the second generation, which is the natural result of their socialisation in the German society, appears as a threat to the parents' identity as it seems to imply that their way of living is not considered acceptable. The parents' concern for the second generation and the attempt to bind their children to their 'traditional' culture is thus not surprising.

The magazine *Wartha* creates a self image of the Malayali community which is considered by it to be able to influence public image sufficiently in its favour. Given this it is not so important in how far it resembles the community's and its members' actual position in society and also not that the public image will not really be influenced by a small niche magazine like *Wartha*. The important aspect is that the readers are provided with a 'positive' (constructed) identity which reassures them in the still alien environment. Thus, *Wartha* is so popular.

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The magazine *Wartha* is published by the Diözesanbildungswerk Münster, Ausländerreferat, Dr. Mathew Mandapathil, Postfach 1366, 48135 Münster, Germany.