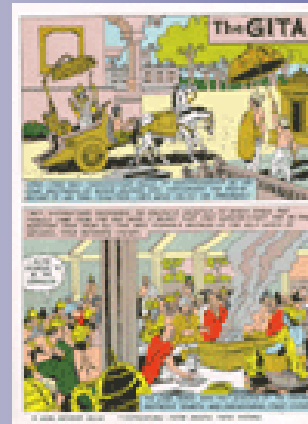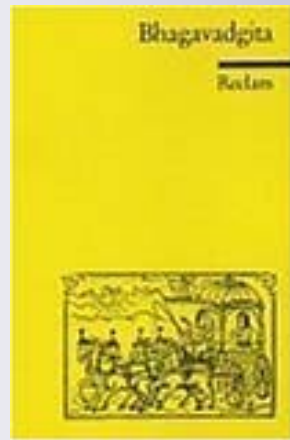# Indian Religions in Germany
Their role for the children of the migrants

Dr. Urmila Goel
Europa-Universität Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder
and University of Bergen
Bergen, 10th October 2007

Urmila Goel

- researcher in cultural and social anthropology
- affiliated to European University Viadrina in Frankfurt/Oder, Germany
- visiting scholar at University of Bergen
- research interest:
  - dealing with experiences of racism
- research project:
  - "The virtual second generation"

Structure

1. Bengali Hindus
2. Malayali Christians
3. Pakistani Ahmadiyas
4. Afghan Sikh
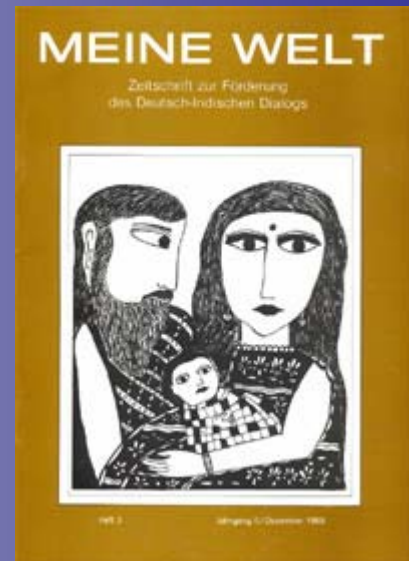5. Hindu Nationalism
6. Conclusions

Bengali Hindus

- students migrating in the 1950s/60s from Bengal
  – many Brahmins

- religious socialisation of children
  – norms
  – rites and myths
  – attending Pujas

- role of Durga Puja
  – meeting place
  – involvement of young
  – web projects
  – network

Durga Puja Cologne
ॐ শ্রী শ্রী দুর্গা পূজা ॐ
www.durgapujacologne.de

Malayali Christians

- nurses recruited in the 1960s/70s
- religious and ethnic infrastructure
  - Indian masses
  - societies, Malayalam schools, seminars, magazines
  - community and control
- involvement in ‚white' Church structures
- ascribed as Hindus

MEINE WELT
Zeitschrift zur Förderung
des Deutsch-Indischen Dialogs

Pakistani Ahmadiyas

- persecuction in Pakistan
    - asylum seekers in Germany

- religious infrastructure
    - mosques, meetings, magazines
    - community and control

- exclusions
    - among Muslims
    - islamophobic
        - ‚Indian' and ‚white'

- meeting place
    - eg. internet portal: pak24.de
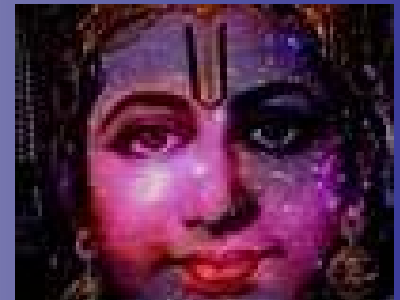
Afghani Sikh

- persecution in Afghanistan
    - pogrom in India (1984)
    - asylum seeker in Germany
- religious and ethnic infrastructure
    - gurdwaras and mandirs
    - community and control
- exclusion
    - in Afghanistan
    - among ‚Indians‘
    - by ‚white‘ Germans
- strategies
    - choosing identity
    - Turban

pricutre:Michael Nijhawan

Hindu Nationalism

- family background:
  - ‚white' mother / Marathi father
  - Indian family: Hindu Nationalist
- patriotism
  - lacking in Germany
  - pride in India
- Hindu nationalism
  - India = Hinduism (philosophy)
  - India first
- criticising
  - violence
  - politics, globalisation
  - homogenisation
  - institutionalisation
  - RSS, VHP

- supporting:
  - philosophy
  - renaming towns
  - Hindi as national language
  - condemning missioning
  - idea behind Ayodhya
- in Germany
  - politcally: left

picture: Christiane Brosius

Conclusions

- community vs. individual approaches
  - dependend primarily on migration history
- religiosity
  - actively engaged, practising, norms, secular
- marker of difference/ identity
- experiences of othering
  - opposing ‚stereotypes'
- importance of networks

Thank you!

More information on www.urmila.de