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## **Writing the Margins: Plural Perspectives on Transgender Lives from Transgender Activists in India**

The Supreme Court of India in a judgement of 2014, affirmed recognition of transgenders. This was hailed as a great step forward. However, a more nuanced understanding shows that the verdict also increases greater state and social control over gender marginality and gender expressions that question the binary. This contradictory judgement compels me to look at literary articulations of transgender activists, examining the plural, often quite divergent perspectives that occur.

Manobi Bandyopadhyay tells of the conflict between the physical and the mental orientation, and hegemonic concept of physical identity and gender performativity. Her writing also sharply questions by implication the component of the SC verdict where transgender seems equated with hijra. In Living Smile Vidya's *I Am Vidya*, the focus is on the transformation from the supposed to the real, which in a way is also a journey from the centre to the margin. A Revathi's, *The Truth About Me* looks at the violence, trauma and degradations that transgenders face, especially when being a hijra and being a sex worker appear the main occupations before them.

Finally, Kalki Subramaniam's *We Are Not The Others*, reinserts the transgenders in the world in its totality, and in a combination of poems and essays, sets out to challenge, and subvert binary visions based on traditional culture, such as Krishna, the male god protecting Draupadi when she is about to be disrobed, in a poem that both invokes that image and then rejects it.

This study will be based on autobiographies and other writings of Indian transgenders, and also on theoretical insights developed by Indian queer activist – scholars. It will examine the problems involved in the interaction between Indian lived reality and terms originally developed in the West.

**Keywords:** Transgender, hijra, gender – binary