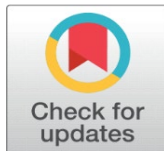


MARY KOM — AN EPITOME OF VIGOUR AND VITALITY: FROM REAL TO REEL DEPICTING WOMEN'S STRENGTH THROUGH BOLLYWOOD

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Received 21 August 2025
Accepted 06 September 2025
Published 17 October 2025

DOI
[10.29121/granthaalayah.v13.i9.2025.6420](https://doi.org/10.29121/granthaalayah.v13.i9.2025.6420)

Funding: This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

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ABSTRACT

This paper explores the cinematic portrayal of Indian boxer Mary Kom in the 2014 Bollywood biopic *Mary Kom*, directed by Omung Kumar. It examines how the film translates the real-life struggles, triumphs, and spirit of India's foremost female boxing legend onto the silver screen, contributing to the larger discourse of women's strength, perseverance, and empowerment through popular media. Further, the paper highlights the significance of Bollywood in narrating stories of remarkable women who break stereotypes and inspire societal change.

Keywords: Embodiment, Determined, Chauvinism, Humiliating, Federation, Precisely, Vehemently, Acquainted, Acclaimed, Commitment, Empowerment Stereotype

1. INTRODUCTION

Indian cinema has gained distinction of being acknowledged worldwide with its covering of plethora of topics, themes, values, traditions, and cultures. As a cultural product, cinema always reflects societal attitudes and contributes in shaping the public views to a very great extent. As has been said by John Abbott "Every man's ability may be strengthened or increased by culture". We find Indian cinema to be the chief torch bearer in this respect in today's scenario of multimedia revolution. It has been a matter of great pride and admiration that in recent years, biographical films, especially women centric, have become the area of interest of the producers and directors, which present quite vividly, the lives, struggles, achievements, and adulation of women in one way or the other. One such landmark

film is Mary Kom, which chronicles the life of that Indian woman boxer who shattered the shackles of male chauvinism and male domination in the area of sports.

The movie Mary Kom was released on 5 September 2014. It was directed by Umang Kumar and produced by one of the most famous producers of Indian film industry, Sanjay Leela Bhansali. The movie won the National film award for the best popular film providing wholesome entertainment. The character of Mary Kom was stupendously enacted by Priyanka Chopra and for which she acclaimed the best actress Film fare award. Actor Darshan Kumar who was a newcomer to the film industry, played the role of Mary Kom's husband. Whereas Sunil Thapa, a Nepalese actor, enacted the role of Mary Kom's coach very impressively. The movie shows the life, struggles and career of the first female boxer of India who not only brought laurels to Indian sports, but also motivated innumerable girls and players by her achievements. Mary Kom is an unrefuted boxing legend, who has to her credit several remarkable milestones. She is the only one in the world who has won world championship six times. She has to her credit a gold medal which one in the Asian games in 2014 in South Korea and another gold which she won in 2018 in Commonwealth games, she has made every Indian proud by winning bronze medal in London Olympics in 2012. She has been honoured with Padma Shri in 2006 Padma Bhushan in 2013, Padma Bhushan in 2020 and Khel Ratna award in recognition with her contributions to sports, she also became an MP Rajya Sabha in 2016.

Priyanka Chopra has enacted very brilliantly the role of Mary Kom and shows her journey of becoming a boxer so realistically that the readers feel totally connected with her. The scene in which Mary Kom's father wants her boxing gloves and throws them in fire, Priyanka Chopra stands helplessly in front of him and her mother, holding her tears back and looking pathetically as the smoke erupts, shows how a girl has to abide by the rules and regulations, traditions and practices of the family setting aside her own desires and ambitions; but then, after a while, she tries to convince her father that she is a natural player, and her coach has also full faith in her boxing career. The father remains adamant and asks her to choose between her career and her father and then Priyanka Chopra after a pause, says in a low, but determined voice that she would go for boxing. This decision becomes the turning point in her career and later on, we see her father admiring her decision.

In another scene when Priyanka Chopra is shown shouting against the judgement where she is not declared the winner by the Officials of the Federation, despite playing better, depicts the torturous and humiliating experience of a genuine player when partiality enters the game. Another scene, where she is shown to make repeated and futile efforts to give her apology letter to the sports authorities is also heart rending.

The scene when after getting married in a church, she goes with her husband in a car, and her coach overlooks her from a height, is also very touching. The plight of a true and sincere teacher is shown when he feels cheated and empty handed when the disciple leaves him at the top of her career. It was this Coach who guided her to become a successful boxer. There is a scene where the coach teaches her and tells her some requisites which are to be followed precisely in the game. He suggests that commitment, full surrender, full focus, no mercy, and no pain no gain make a player a winner in boxing.

The actor, Sunil Thapa has very beautifully and vehemently enacted the role of the coach in the movie. His role shows that a with the efforts of a sincere and dedicated teacher even a pebble can become a diamond. The role of the husband has

been played by the new artist, Darshan Kumar and he has also justified it fully. The scene when he as a husband applies ointment on the neck of the tired Priyanka Chopra after the day long tedious schedule and when he takes care of the kids, make the audience believe that there can be a man also behind the success of a woman. A family flourishes completely with the full cooperation and contribution of all the members of the family together.

There are scenes where tough fight is shown between Priyanka Chopra and her opponents. The actress has very efficiently learnt the basic details of the game and Mary Kom's personal style of playing. She admits that her experience has been gratifying after all the challenges the role made her to undergo because she knew that she has to justify a dedicated sports person and a national representative which was a huge responsibility on her shoulders as well. She went to Imphal many times to get acquainted with the boxer's intriguing personal life, and sporting aspects. The Times of India published on 31st December, 2020 a story where Priyanka Chopra admits, "It was both physically and emotionally demanding."

The story of Mary Kom guides us and shows us that one's persistent efforts and undiminished will power leads one to success and this is the fact of life also and as has been said that no pains, no gains and a Brainy quote also fortifies it, "The truth is, the harder you fight, the sweeter are the rewards in the end." The journey of Marty Kom was never a path of roses which she treaded joyfully rather it had been a constant path of thorns in the forms of harsh challenges and tough adversity and had always been demanding, both her concentration and her time. Her unwavering and relentless zeal and her always ready to do nature and adaptability made her reach to those heights which were just like a dream to most of the people in this world. Here, to quote Dr Kalam would not be an exaggeration "It doesn't matter who you are —if you have a vision and determination to achieve our vision, you will certainly achieve it." The vision of Mary Kom led her towards her goal and she became the top most boxer in the world. Nothing, no hindrance could stop her, rather she became all the more vigorous and determined with every challenge. It is righteous to call her an embodiment of women empowerment.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

None.

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