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Film Review: Bend It Like Beckham

The file *Bend It Like Beckham* is a movie about a 18-year-old British Indian girl named Jess and her struggle with her family about what she wants to do in her life versus what her family expects her to be. Jess is the younger sister of two girls in the family and has an older sister named Pinky. Pinky is a typical girl who likes fashion and about to get married with her boyfriend, but Jess wants to be a professional football player which is a very unlikeable idea for any typical girls in her age. Jess plays football in the park with her friend and has admiration for the British’s football star David Beckham. As Pinky’s wedding approaches, Jess’ parents believe that she is too old to play football and she should act like a traditional Indian girl like her sister Pinky. Jess gets recruited to a local women’s football team by Jules who sees Jess playing in the park. Jess joins the team knowing that her parents will disapprove her action but does it anyway and eventually gets involved with team’s coach Joe romantically. Jess’ parents eventually discover about her activity force her to quit the team and discourage Jess’ relationship with Joe. Jess’ father sees her sadness during the Pinky’s wedding and let her leave to play in the finals. Jess and Jules impress the American scout during the game with their performance during the game and get offer to come play in the United States. Jess’ father tells her about his past where he could not play Cricket which was one thing he wanted to do and gives Jess permission to go to the United States. Jess and Joe renew their relationship before she leaves for the United States and movie ends with Pinky being pregnant and shows that Joe and Jess’ father became close.

The movie shows some of the prominent ideas or issues that persist in the India society. One major idea is that Indian girls should always act and behave like traditional Indian girls, like being lady-like and do not act out of norm. Pinky is a good example of this idea as she behaves like a traditional Indian girl. Pinky likes fashion and other things girl would like while Jess plays football which is unlikely thing for a girl at her age. The typical Indian parents would want their daughters to grow up properly so that in the future, they have higher chance to find suitable husband who is financially successful. Pinky’s boyfriend whom she is marrying operates a successful automobile company which is evident about this belief in the Indian culture. Jess’ parents disapproving of Jess and Joe’s relationship at first would have to do something with this idea as well aside from Joe not being an Indian. Joe coaches a local amateur women’s team which is not a position that pay handsomely. The idea of marrying someone who is financially successful is general wishes of most of the parents but such belief is more strongly presents within the parents who had hard life during their life. Jess’ parents did not have such financial success during their earlier life so instead of playing football, they want Jess to focus on her academic success rather.

Another idea that is captured by this film is that the ultimate goal for an Indian girl is to get married. The Indian girls can be successful by achieving a financial success but that can also equally achieved by finding a husband who is financially successful. Pinky is once again a strong example for this idea since she pretty much devotes herself to get married with her boyfriend who runs a successful automobile company during the movie. While it is not strongly portrayed in this film, another popular belief about marriage is that girls should marry someone as early as they can. When the girls get too old and do not get married, people might think that those girls have problems or just view the girls in negative way because of their belief.

The third idea that is captured by this film is that in Indian culture, it is preferred that the girls marry people from same culture. In the film, Jess’ parents disapprove of Jess and her relationship with Joe since Joe is an Irish. If Jess were to marry Joe in the future, not only Jess but her parents can be negatively viewed within the Indian society. This notion can be seen when Pinky tells Jess that while Jess can marry anyone she loves but she should not marry someone who is not Indian since everyone will view them differently.

Bend It Like Beckham is a fun and interesting film that portrays Indian culture in unlikely manner thru a girl’s life in Britain. Jess’ struggle and hardship could be a life for every other girls out there but this film successfully captures the underlying Indian culture and the ideas within it. Jess tries hard to break the social norm of the Indian girls while pursuing her true goals which shows the development of Jess as a person but also the changing values of modern Indian girls. The film is positive, realistic and also delightful at the same time which makes it easy and enjoyable to learn about the Indian culture from the film.