

Bend it like beckham

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The film " Bend it like Beckham" was directed by Gurinder Chadha and was released in 2002. This box office hit was a story about two women living in England belonging to different ethnic backgrounds but sharing the love for soccer and the difficulties of conforming to familial pressures. Keira Knightly played the white girl Jess who rebels against her mother's stereotypical views about women playing sports. Her mother confuses her as a lesbian because of her boyish interests.

The other girl is a British Indian Sikh named Jessminder who belongs to an intensely conservative Indian background. The film is a comedic response to traditional Indian values and culture. It expressed the dilemmas faced by the young Indians living in Britain. These kids try in vain to reconcile their parents' values and culture into their own. In the same way, Jessminder's parents want her to study hard in London and have a traditional Sikh arranged marriage. Jessminder on the other hand wants to play football professionally.

The film shows various shades of Indian culture. The bhangra music throughout the film gives it a unique Indian flavour. Another interesting thing learnt through this movie was that women were expected to know traditional Indian dishes before they were married. They were judged by the perfection in their cooking of these dishes. Indian culture also does not permit displaying public shows of affection. When Jess and Jules are seen hugging by Jess's Indian relatives, they mistake Jules for a boy and straightaway complain to her parents.

Her parents are horrified and forbid her from wearing shorts and playing football with the boys in the park. This showed how close-knit the families are

and how orthodox some Indian families remain even after staying in Britain for so long. Indian culture encourages big ostentatious weddings. Jess sister's wedding was a great show of the dancing food and music that is prevalent at a traditional Indian wedding. Indians also, despise, specially girls marrying "goras" or white men.

Jess breaks her traditional boundaries when she starts liking her white coach and kisses him after a match. It was alarming that the shorts worn by Jess are considered vulgar and promiscuous by the Indian culture. This movie changed my perception of Indian culture. I could relate to many of the dilemmas faced by the youngsters in the film. To conclude, I gained a greater appreciation and acceptance from the knowledge that love of family and the value of friendship are common spheres in all religions and cultures.