Bend It Like Beckham Movie Analysis

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Introduction

“Bend it Like Beckham” is a movie that revolves around Jess and her dream to be a footballer. She belongs to a Sikh Indian family living abroad that is quite traditional and has fixed values. Her dream to be a great footballer compelled her to go against the norms of her family, who are quite strict and cannot imagine a girl being a part of a foreign team. But she is shown to be quite consistent, with the help of Juliet, her British friend, and Joe, an Irish coach. In the movie, Jess’s family also plays a significant role; initially, after learning about her, they disagree with her due to their cultural values, but eventually, they agree with her and support her. The family puts all the cultural and traditional conflict aside and accepts Jess with her dream. It is a comedy movie that focuses on the cultural interaction and racism people hold for each other (Bend It Like Beckham, 2002). One can observe cultural relativism in this film and observe that no culture is superior to others. Rather, traditions are meant to be respected, not to humiliate someone.

Description Of Movie Family

Bend It Like Beckham focuses on an eighteen-year-old girl and her dream of being a great football player. The whole movie revolves around the conflicts between different cultures, the girl’s dream, and her wishes, which make her against her family values and traditions. There are only a few characters in the movie, although they are all important as all contribute their equal part in making a whole family. The movie begins with the planning of the marriage of Jess’ sister Pinky, who is a self-centered girl and is concerned about her lifestyle. She loves to wear expensive dresses, both modern and traditional, and wants to look stylish and different from others. Initially, Pinky is shown as a narcissistic girl who is not concerned with anybody else, but as the movie progresses, she becomes concerned for her younger sister, too. Joe, the Irish coach of Jess’s football team, is also a significant character in the movie. He also faces the same issue of racism, just like Jess, as he belongs to a different ethnic group. Jess’s mother is a strong, traditional lady who loves her homeland and has shown Jess’s obsession with football. She loves her daughters, has brought up her girls with strong traditional values, and has trained them in all sorts of house chores, but she dislikes her involvement in football. The movie shows the severe tension between the Indian and British cultures, with an ethos of Irish culture.

Assessment Of Cultural And Ethnic Traits

This film is famous for showing cultural relativism along with biculturalism, which has been shown by the presence of Indian and British values, traditions, norms, and culture (Friedman, Bowden & Jones, 2003). The film shows not only the cultural values of the two countries but also their thinking patterns and their philosophy of life.

Socio-Cultural Aspects

After the 2nd World War, British culture changed a lot, both culturally and socially. There are some factors behind these changes, and they have resulted in numerous impacts. One of the major effects of these changes is the drastic change in women's roles, as women were not supposed to work with men. Today's women of the British Empire are independent women who can work freely anywhere with anybody. There are major differences between today's English culture and Indian culture, which has diverse backgrounds with strong traditions and values. Indians have strong traditional values and norms, and they have preserved their values over time. They have a strong love for the family and respect for their elders. The movie has shown this socio-cultural difference in a unique and convincing manner.

Environmental Aspects

The environment plays a very important role in shaping one's lifestyle. The environment that has been portrayed in the movie shows a huge difference between the two cultures. The environment of British people is one in which people share equal gender roles. Despite this factor, people are being discriminated against based on their ethnicity, race, color, religion, and culture. The movie shows this discrimination against Sikh families and Irish coaches in Britain just because of their ethnicity. On the other hand, the environment of the Indian family is different from that of English people. The movie shows that although Jess's family has been living abroad for a long time, they still have a deep love for their values and traditions. The movie also shows the Indians discriminate against people based on their ethnicity, as Pinky got her engagement broken because she was kissing some white boy, and her in-laws saw her doing so.

Communication

The movie has shown the communication differences between the two cultures. Indian culture focuses on non-verbal communication rather than verbal communication. Individuals belonging to Indian cultures prefer to stay silent in the presence of their elders as a symbol of respect. On the other hand, English culture focuses on individual freedom and autonomy. People of individualistic cultures, like English and Irish, prefer direct verbal communication. There are specified rules and ways to talk with

elders in Indian cultures.

Decision-Making Power

The movie has also shown the changes in the cultures over time; it has been shown that youngsters prefer to have decision-making power rather than giving this authority to family or elders, as in the case of Jess' friend Juliet, who does not like her mother's interference regarding her sexual orientation. However, in Indian culture, it has been shown that the highest authority belongs to the family's elder male member, and no one is allowed to speak against his decisions.

Roles In Family

The role of the mother is different in both cultures, as evidenced by the role of Jess and Juliet's mothers. The Indian mother transmits the knowledge of family traditions to the family, whereas the British mother is an independent woman. Both mothers love their daughters, and although both do not like their daughters' involvement in football, Juliet's mother accepts it earlier than that of Jess (Gee, 2014).

Assessment Of Development Or Functional Competency

When people share cultures, values, and identities with each other, they start accepting each other's uniqueness and individuality, as shown in Bend It Like Beckham.

Values

The Indian culture in the movie shows the importance of traditions, values, norms, family, and elders. On the other hand, British culture has shown respect for independence and freedom.

Child Rearing And Socialization

The childrearing practices shown in the movie are quite different in the two cultures. Juliet does not allow her mother to interfere, whereas Jess's parents make the decisions in Jess's family. The movie shows that Juliet's mother wants to resolve the conflict with her daughter, and she is shown to be assertive like Juliet as she possesses all the traits similar to her daughter. On the other hand, Jess' mother is a relationship-oriented woman who loves to do house chores, and she wants her daughters to also get skilled in these activities so that they can have a good marital life in the future (Bend it like Beckham, 2002). Indian parents, in the movie, are shown to place a lot of emphasis on family,

marriage, home-making, house chores, and children. British culture has been shown to revolve around giving autonomy to the individual for marriage, but arranged marriages are still preferred in Indian families. A strong parent-child relationship is preferred in Indian cultures, whereas a weak bond is shown in the movie between an English mother and her daughter.

Healthcare Practices

No special healthcare beliefs and practices have been shown in the movie in both cultures, but one major thing that was focused on in both cultures was the hatred for same-sex relationships. Juliet's mother is shown to be worried about the sexual orientation of her daughter and thinks that she has feelings for her friend, Jess.

Adaptation

The movie has shown that even after living in England for a long time, Indians have not accepted the British culture and have not adjusted to their uniqueness. Similarly, the people of England still discriminate against others based upon their ethnicity and race. However, the movie shows another unique thing: although the elders are quite fixated on their traditions, youngsters are quite adapted and have accepted each other's identities and uniqueness. But in the end, the movie shows the acceptance of the changes and new values by elders (Desai, 2013).

Summary/Conclusion

The movie Bend It Like Beckham shows the uniqueness of cultures and identities. The film is different because it shows the cultural disputes between the two different and major cultures of the time, i.e., Indian culture and British culture. The movie shows how the girl pursues her dreams despite much cultural disparity and differences. The movie shows multiculturalism in a very exclusive manner and depicts differences. The movie has shown the importance of both cultures and that everyone is unique in their own way (Friedman, Bowden & Jones, 2003).

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