

BEND IT LIKE BECKHAM

directed by : Gurinder Chadha

CHARACTERS

Jesminder 'Jess' Bhamra

- passionate
- family Oriented
- loves football and idolizes David Beckham, but her parents don't approve of this because they want her to be a proper Indian woman and wife, by marrying a "nice Indian boy" and to have a stable job.
- Jess goes behind her parent's back to play in a girl's football team, the Hounslow Harriers
- she defies stereotypes and expectations by following her dreams.
- "I didn't ask to be good at football, Guru Nanak must have blessed me."

Jules

- passionate
- family oriented
- similar to Jess because her mother wants her to be more feminine and doesn't like her playing soccer and being a 'tomboy'.
- has a crush on the coach, Joe. She gets hurt and jealous at Jess when she almost kisses Joe in Germany, unbeknownst to Jess that she has feelings for him
- aside from her jealousy, she is supportive of Jess and gets over her anger
- funny, likable and helpful character who helps Jess deal with her parents
- "Mother, just because I wear trakkies and play sport does not make me a lesbian!"

Mr. Bhamra

- protective of Jess and doesn't want her to be discriminated like he was if she plays football.
- "I don't want Jessie to suffer. I want her to fight."

Mrs. Bhamra

- portrayed as strict and assertive
- very traditional and forces her beliefs on Jess.
- "What family would want a daughter in law who can run around kicking a football but can't make round chapatis?"

Mrs. Paxton

- feminine
- stereotypical
- fashionable
- wants Jules to be more feminine
- “All I’m saying is, there is a reason why sporty spice is the only one with a fella.”

Joe

- passionate for football and coaching the Hounslow Harriers
- throughout the film, he and Jess develop feelings for each other = this is one of the main conflicts in the movie as it shows how Jess is torn between football and Joe, a ‘gora’ and her traditional Indian family and their expectations.
- “Your mum’s a barrel of laughs compared to my dad.”

THEMES

racism

Joe : “Look, Jess I saw it, she fouled you, you just overreacted.”

Jess : “That’s not all, she called me a ‘Paki’. But I guess that’s something you wouldn’t understand.”

Joe: “Jess, I’m Irish, of course I understand what it feels like.”

Mr. Bhamra : “When I was a teenager in Nairobi, I was the best fast bowler in our school. But when I came to this country... nothing. The bloody ‘Goras’ in their clubhouses made fun of my turban and sent me off packing.”

Soccer Team Girl: So, you can choose, does that mean you can marry a white boy?

Jess: White, no, black, definitely not, a Muslim, no way!

= Every culture is a bit racist towards others, as this quote shows that Indians can only marry other Indians.

sexism

Tony’s friend : “Look at the tits on the captain!”

Tony : “Why can’t you just see them as footballers?”

- Paula suggests to Jules “that girls be doing girly things... not boyish things like sport.”
- It is Indian culture for Indian women to get married and stay at home and be a housewife,

and that it is not appropriate for girls to be “running around showing their bare legs.”

friendship

- the friendship between Jules and Jess shows that sometimes there can be fights and misunderstandings
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- the friendship between Tony and Jess shows how childhood friends can support = Tony offered to get engaged with Jess just so that she can play football
 - “Well, you fancying your gorah coach is okay with me. Besides, he’s quite fit.”

culture clashes

- The film explores the differences between the British and Indian culture and the problems it causes for Asian-British young adults who try to fit in. Jess is shown to have adapted to the British culture, as she has more modernized beliefs from the traditional Indian culture. She also has an English accent.
- Teenagers are being seen not as individuals, but as their family. This could be a problem due to the pressure of having your family’s reputation resting on your shoulders, and can maybe even drive that one person to rebel from the stress of having to be perfect everywhere and always = when Jess is seen ‘kissing an English boy’ by Teetu’s parents. This leads them to cancel Pinky’s and Teetu’s wedding.

“Anyone can cook Aloo Gobi, but who can bend a ball like Beckham?”

FILM TECHNIQUES

music

- ‘Independence Day’ - when Jess and Jules go out shopping. Independence Day's lyrics talk about how you should never give up on your dreams. Many songs in the film have messages similar to this, as following your dreams is a giant part of the film. This song also represents how throughout the movie Jess gains her own independence and can finally stand up for herself and won't let anybody hold her down.
- ‘She’s a lady’ - This song talks a lot about the perfect woman - polite and knowing what and when to say things. It says: ‘She always knows her place’ and ‘She never gets in the way’, which is a lot like what many Indian women are expected to be like due to their traditions. The ironic thing about this song is that it is being played when the girls’ soccer team is training, which seems like the opposite thing this song is talking about. This song can also be perceived a different way when playing while the girls are training. It could be like saying even though all these girls are playing what is traditionally thought of as a man's game, they are still women. Playing sport doesn't define you as a ‘tom-boy’ or a lesbian.

- 'Nessun Dorma' and upbeat traditional Indian music - Plays during Jess' football match. 'Nessun Dorma' crescendos as the ball moves into the goal post to build up tension and suspense. In another scene, an upbeat Indian song is playing at Pinky's wedding. Both Pinky and Jess are lifted at the same time. This shows the contrast between the sisters and Indian traditions and Jess' passion.

montages

- shopping scene
- wedding scene

lighting

- at the club in Germany, the flashing lights added to the upbeat, club like atmosphere
- at Pinky's wedding

costumes

- Indian Saris : Mrs Bhamra's + at the engagement and wedding
- football gear

KEY SCENES

- Jules meets Jess when she sees Jess playing football at the park with the Indian guys.
- Jess trying out for the Hounslow Harriers and meeting Joe
- Jess and Jules going shopping, and her parents found that bought trainers and banned her from
- Nightclub in Germany
- Pinky's wedding and Mr Bhamra letting her play the final
- The football final where Jess wins
- Where Tony offers to get engaged to Jess and her parents let her go to Santa Clara for her football scholarship
- The airport scene where Jess and Jules say goodbye to their parents and see Beckham, Jess and Joe kiss.

SETTING

- Hounslow, England
- Early 2000s

> contrast <

Football life x Jess	Family x Jess
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Soccer Field - Changing Room 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Jess' house and bedroom with a David Beckham poster

- Football Match at Germany
- Jules' mom's brassiere shop
- shops
- Old Trafford Stadium
- Jules' house and bedroom

- wedding venue
- Wedding party at the Bhamra's house, where it is decorated

(hope this helps! good luck)