Gender Roles in Sri Lanka

Buddhi talks about women and family in her country.

**Todd:** So, Buddihini, today we're going to talk about roles and family. Traditional roles or what people do. Now in Sri Lanka, is it common for usually the women to do all the cooking?

**Buddhi:** It was so. It was so, but still the mentality is such that they expect the daughters and the wives to do the kitchen stuff and the cleaning, the laundry and all that, but we do have a lot of working mothers now and they are many single parents as well so the culture has been changing a little bit, but still the majority is that women should do the usual household stuff and the men do the work outside and get the money. If it's like the cityside, and if the wife is also working, obviously it's not expected that the wife ends up doing everything.

**Todd:** So, what happens? Do you split the duties or do you hire a servant?

**Buddhi:** Yes, hiring some helper is quite common in Sri Lanka. I personally don't agree with that.

**Todd:** Oh, really, you don't want to have like a cook or a maid or anything like that?

**Buddhi:** It'll be nice to have but I wouldn't want to have. I want to do my thing on my own. I think it's easier to do things on your own, I'd make sure when I get married that I have the correct partner who'd want to help me out with things and having kids and all that. I wouldn't want somebody else to come and help us out.

**Todd:** So, when you get married, you'd like to split the duties with your husband?

**Buddhi:** Of course.

**Todd:** So, you expect your husband to cook and clean?

**Buddhi:** At least help me out and make sure that he knows what I'm doing. He values what I do cause I'm definitely not the kind who'll stay at home and do only the household stuff. I'll definitely go out and get the money as well.

**Todd:** So, you want to be the bread winner?

**Buddhi:** I wouldn't say that. We will share. I mean, why he suffer alone, and why I suffer alone at home. We suffer together.

**Todd:** Now is this a common viewpoint with most young women from your country?

**Buddhi:** Yeah, I'd say so. I'd say so, but there are many people who don't like to go out and be a working mom. They'd rather prefer staying at home and you know, waiting for their husband to come home in the evening or stuff like that, but I'm definitely not that kind.
Grammar Page

Work with a partner. Circle the mistakes and write them correctly.

1. My sister is business woman.

2. In Sri Lanka, woman traditionally do all the cooking and housework.

3. My mother said, “You have 25 years old now, you should get married.”

4. I am don’t agree with getting a cook or a maid.

5. He gives to her all his money and she expects him to do all the housework.

6. She say him that she is not a traditional wife.

7. She’s married with a doctor.

8. He said he was going to help her, but he didn’t do nothing.

9. I going to have 3 kids and be a housewife.

10. Many of people in my country think that the wife and husbands should be equal.
Bits and Pieces

Todd: So, Buddihini, today we're going to talk about roles and family. Traditional roles or what people do. Now in Sri Lanka, is it common for usually the women to do all the cooking?

Buddhi: It was so. It was so, but still the mentality is such that ____________ the daughters and the wives to do the kitchen stuff and the cleaning, the laundry and all that, but we do have a lot of working mothers now and they are many single parents as well so the culture has been changing a little bit, but still the majority is that ____________ the usual household stuff and the men do the work outside and get the money. If it's like the cityside, and if the wife is also working, obviously it's not expected that the wife ends up doing everything.

Todd: So, what happens? Do you split the duties or do you hire a servant?

Buddhi: Yes, ____________ some helper is quite common in Sri Lanka. I personally don't agree with that.

Todd: Oh, really, you don't want to have like a cook or a maid or anything like that?

Buddhi: It'll be nice to have but ____________ to have. I want to do my thing on my own. I think it's easier to do things on your own, I'd make sure when I get married that I have the correct partner who'd want to help me out with things and having kids and all that. I wouldn't want somebody else to come and help us out.

Todd: So, when you get married, you'd like to split the duties with your husband?

Buddhi: Of course.

Todd: So, ____________ your husband to cook and clean?

Buddhi: At least help me out and make sure that ____________ what I'm doing. He values what I do cause I'm definitely not the kind who'll stay at home and do only the household stuff. I'll definitely go out and get the money as well.

Todd: So, you want to be the bread winner?

Buddhi: I wouldn't say that. ____________. I mean, why he suffer alone, and why I suffer alone at home. We suffer ____________ together.

Todd: Now is this a common viewpoint with most young women from your country?

Buddhi: Yeah, I'd say so. I'd say so, but there are many people who don't like to go out and be a working mom. ____________ prefer staying at home and you know, waiting for their husband to come home in the evening or stuff like that, but I'm definitely not that...
**What do you think?**

**Discussion**

1. Is university education important for women in your culture?

2. Should women and men split responsibilities equally?

3. Do you think you would be happier staying at home or working?

4. Would you consider divorce if your partner was too lazy to do housework?

5. Do you agree with Buddh’s opinion about having a cook or a maid?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Write the number of the question being answered in the box</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>☐ Olya - Ukraine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Asako - Japan</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Victor - Mexico</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>☐ Susan - USA</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Olya - Ukraine
  - There are some things that women think are important and are better at doing. For example, I feel stressed when the house is messy, but my husband doesn’t. So I do the cleaning. On the other hand, my husband gets stressed if we don’t pay our bills on the same day that they come in the mail. Personally, it doesn’t bother me. So he does it.

- Asako - Japan
  - Traditionally, a woman would stay with her man even if the situation was very bad for the woman. Recently, that is changing a lot and if a woman is not happy then she can leave her husband and get a job. In the past, this wasn’t possible because women didn’t work. However, I wouldn’t divorce just because he didn’t do housework.

- Victor - Mexico
  - A lot of people tell me that they would get bored if they had to stay home all the time. I was an only child so I guess I don’t have as much of a need to be social as other people do. I’m happy just being by myself most of the time. It would be perfect to send the kids off to school, take care of the house and then have some time for myself. But I’m a man.

- Susan - USA
  - Well, it hasn’t always been important, but recently just as many women get college degrees as men. If you have a university education, then your chances of getting a good job increase. So people in my culture definitely value the opportunities that it gives to women.

**Write a paragraph or a dialogue about one of the discussion questions:**

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________________________

Go online for the slide show, interactive quiz, and free downloadable MP3 of this interview: [www.elllo.org](http://www.elllo.org) : Interview #956
Grammar Page: ANSWERS

Work with a partner. Circle the mistakes and write them correctly.

1. My sister is business woman.
   
is a business

2. In Sri Lanka, woman traditionally do all the cooking and housework.
   
women

3. My mother said, “You have 25 years old now, you should get married.”
   
you are 25 years

4. I am don’t agree with getting a cook or a maid.
   
I don’t agree with

5. He gives to her all his money and she expects him to do all the housework.
   
gives her

6. She say him that she is not a traditional wife.
   
told him

7. She’s married with a doctor.
   
marrried to a

8. He said he was going to help her, but he didn’t do nothing.
   
anything

9. I going to have 3 kids and be a housewife.
   
I’m going

10. Many of people in my country think that the wife and husbands should be equal.
    
Many people
Todd: So, Buddihini, today we're going to talk about roles and family. Traditional roles or what people do. Now in Sri Lanka, is it common for usually the women to do all the cooking?

Buddhi: It was so. It was so, but still the mentality is such that they expect the daughters and the wives to do the kitchen stuff and the cleaning, the laundry and all that, but we do have a lot of working mothers now and they are many single parents as well so the culture has been changing a little bit, but still the majority is that women should do the usual household stuff and the men do the work outside and get the money. If it's like the cityside, and if the wife is also working, obviously it's not expected that the wife ends up doing everything.

Todd: So, what happens? Do you split the duties or do you hire a servant?

Buddhi: Yes, hiring some helper is quite common in Sri Lanka. I personally don't agree with that.

Todd: Oh, really, you don't want to have like a cook or a maid or anything like that?

Buddhi: It'll be nice to have but I wouldn't want to have. I want to do my thing on my own. I think it's easier to do things on your own, I'd make sure when I get married that I have the correct partner who'd want to help me out with things and having kids and all that. I wouldn't want somebody else to come and help us out.

Todd: So, when you get married, you'd like to split the duties with your husband?

Buddhi: Of course.

Todd: So, you expect your husband to cook and clean?

Buddhi: At least help me out and make sure that he knows what I'm doing. He values what I do cause I'm definitely not the kind who'll stay at home and do only the household stuff. I'll definitely go out and get the money as well.

Todd: So, you want to be the bread winner?

Buddhi: I wouldn't say that. We will share. I mean, why he suffer alone, and why I suffer alone at home. We suffer together.

Todd: Now is this a common viewpoint with most young women from your country?

Buddhi: Yeah, I'd say so. I'd say so, but there are many people who don't like to go out and be a working mom. They'd rather prefer staying at home and you know, waiting for their husband to come home in the evening or stuff like that, but I'm definitely not that