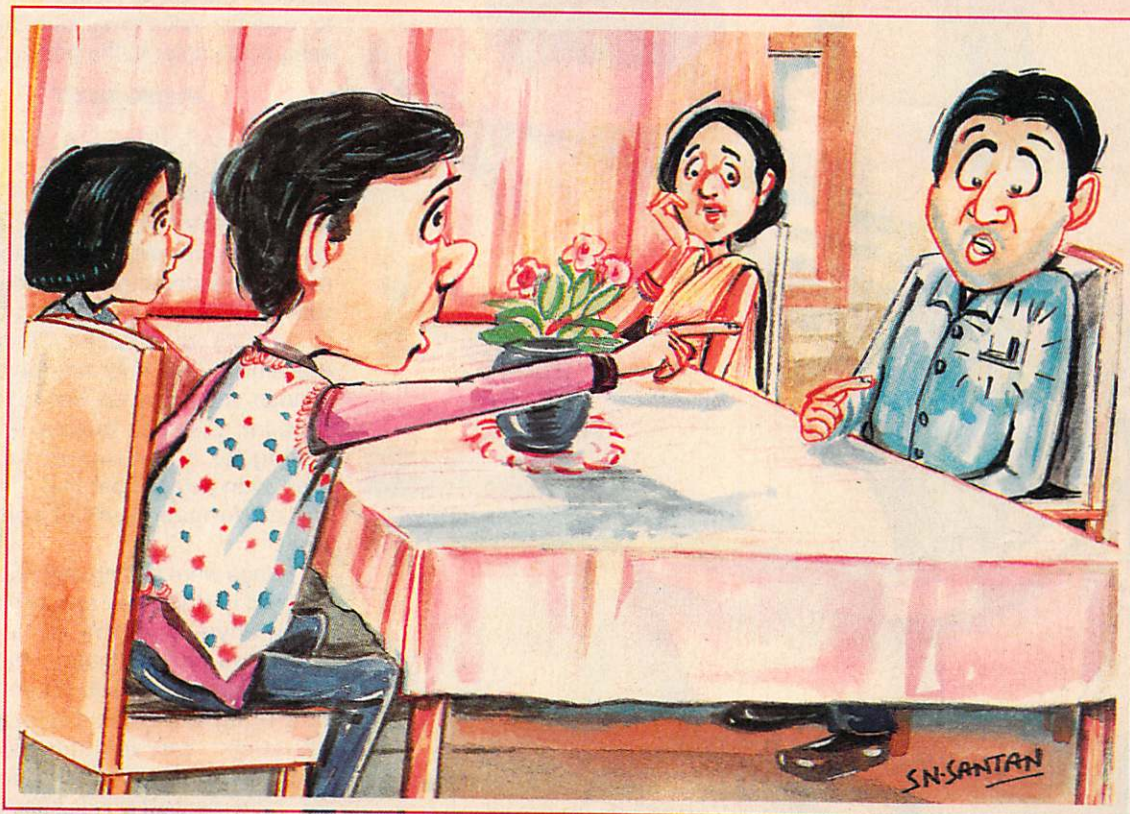


# THE CORDLESS INTERLUDE



After a long pause, the son lifted his arm as if to say that...

The cordless or cellular telephone has been a novelty for some time.

There were no tangled cords to contend with. One could carry it to the bedroom, study, or even to bathroom. Like everything else, the novelty wears out, little by little. Human tendency is to take what is readily available for granted.

Yet, everyone in our house was after it. The tragedy is that being handy and pocket-sized, you keep it in all sorts of nooks and crannies in the house. It had no place of its own as a model with cord had. You will find it in the unlikeliest of places but never where one can find it when needed.

"Where is the blessed phone?" the wife asked. (Second) 1996

**The advantage of  
CT being without  
a cord had  
created a friction in  
the family.  
Thankfully  
the MOH himself  
proved to be the  
culprit!**

Man of the House (MOH) shouted one day when he had to make an urgent call on the way to his office. A pregnant silence greeted this outburst. The reason, no one knew. At least it had the effect of everyone running helter-skelter looking for the phone.

The wife looked for it in the kitchen which was her territory. The daughter looked for it in the bed because that was where she operated it from for hours on end. Without the cord to inhibit her movements she would go on and on. The son did not use the phone as much but he, like the others, had this habit of keeping the phone just anywhere he liked.

One day it will be among his books in the shelf. Another day it will be



One could carry a cordless telephone even to the bathroom.

camouflaged by his clothes in the cupboard and the third day it will be somewhere in the sofa crevices. At a signal all of them would go on a search for the CT. This was a daily occurrence and it could not go on forever. Someone had to put a stop to this waywardness.

The family council met at the dining table on a weekend to thrash out the matter. After an introduction to the subject, the MOH said, "I can't allow this state of affairs to continue any longer. I am prepared to consider any suggestions but there has to be an end to this.

"You know the cellular costs money and we have to be circumspect in its use. We have the regular phone with

the cord and I don't know why you people can't use it. Let's sort out this problem once and for all." He looked around for a response. "I want suggestions from everyone," he repeated. The Lady of the house spoke first. She suggested that a place be earmarked for the CT and everyone should keep the phone there and only there.

"The problem has arisen only because no one has the discipline to do it," said the MOH and looked at the daughter for her input.

"We should form a monitoring squad consisting of the rest of us to bring the delinquent to book, there and then." This idea was discussed threadbare. Though there was much

merit to the suggestion, the entire household was being involved in the policing operation. One has to leave whatever one was doing and get fully occupied with the snooping. The son had a dig at his sister.

"If she is on the phone, it will become a full-time job for the rest of us," he said. The daughter was up in arms and there was a minor skirmish between the siblings and the MOH had to raise his voice to subdue them and bring some order to the proceedings.

### Misplaced CT

"Why not have a system of penalties of, say, one rupee, every time someone misplaced the CT?" asked the daughter making a second suggestion, not willing to have been the mover of a defeated resolution. This was *per se* a good suggestion but then it had its drawbacks. The MOH explained: "We may not have ready change and someone has to keep an account. Disputes thereon will arise calling for a decision or rather an arbitration award from me. This won't work. We must think of something else."

Things were drifting and no solution seemed in sight. The son who had not given any suggestion so far, made what seemed a drastic but most practicable suggestion. "There is only one thing that would improve the situation. We should have the telephone with a cord and dump the CT in the nearest pond or the Arabian Sea," said the man of action.

The MOH assumed the tone of a Dutch uncle. "I can't see why you people cannot be more orderly. Why not follow the simple laws of life and put things back where you took them from. I am afraid things have gone too far. A solution has now got to be found to the question: where is the CT and I want it, here and now." "Here and now," he repeated for emphasis.

There was a pause, a long one. Then the son slowly lifted his arm as if to say that he wanted to speak.

"Yes, go on," said the MOH sternly.

"Please Dad, look for it in your shirt pocket. It is right there," he said and closed his eyes as if in meditation.

There was a shattering silence. And then after what seemed a century, the MOH let out a big guffaw. The atmosphere eased and the meeting dissolved (in good-humoured laughter). ■■