

# The Age

MUMBAI

## Two's company, technology's crowd

**J**ust when you are sitting down for a quiet dinner with your husband, the phone rings and you say, "Not again!" With laptops finding a comfortable corner on beds and mobile phones a constant companion, many couples in Indian cities virtually have to battle with technology to keep the romance alive.

"It's so hard to find quality time for ourselves nowadays. Even if we go out for a quiet dinner, my husband's phone never stops ringing. So we end up not having a good time and eventually fight," said Maneka Singh, a 29-year-old housewife.

Many men and women complain of their partner's pre-occupation with mobiles, laptops,

MP3 players, iPods, videogame consoles and other hi-tech gizmos.

Aditya Kumar, 22, says his girlfriend nags him about his excessive use of the cell phone, laptop and Playstation.

"My girlfriend forever fights on these issues. 'Who were you talking to?' 'Why couldn't you call me instead?' 'Why are you on the laptop?' — these are just some of the statements I get to hear from her almost every day. At times she goes so crazy that she starts making comparisons between the laptop and herself and asks me who I love more. It's insane," Kumar rued.

According to leading psychiatrist Sanjay Chugh, a lot of cou-

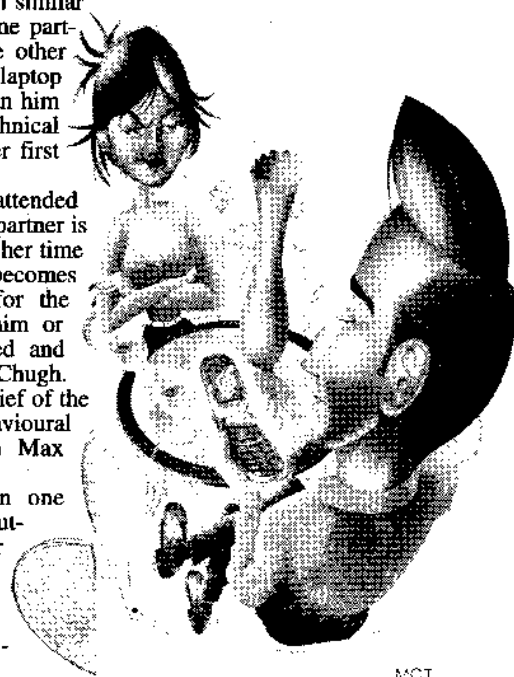
ples approach him with similar problems. "Many a time partners complain that the other person loves his or her laptop or cell phone more than him or her. Or that the technical equipment is his or her first love!" Chugh said.

"They would feel unattended and unimportant as the partner is spending most of his or her time using the gadget. This becomes a source of distress for the other person leaving him or her to feel discontented and dissatisfied," explained Chugh.

Even Samir Parikh, chief of the mental health and behavioural science department in Max Healthcare, agrees.

"Fights happen when one partner ends up substituting the personal or social time and it gets replaced with time used on technology, whether for work or for recreation," Parikh said.

— IANS



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