

Since the time I tied the nuptial knot with him, I had been pining with the idea of having the husband at home for some time. The little time he bestowed upon us all those years was never enough. We always longed for more when he would relatively be free to give us the precious moments of his pleasant company.

Years passed by but our hope never died, never even gradually waned. Then, one day it happened. He thought of relaxing after putting in 17 years of administrative service. We were elated and thought of different ways to make him feel relaxed and happy.

The first few days were total bliss! Never had we come across a more loving, accommodating and a pleasant aspect of his personality before. The morning sun never seemed so relaxed before and the office rush hour gradually diminished into oblivion. He even helped the kids getting ready to school. The lunch hour became a family get together and the atmosphere bubbled with the cracking of jokes and laughter.

Dinnertime was the family

time again and the whole family had dinner in the bedroom stretching royally on the beds. There is no greater pleasure in life than to be happy and contented in the company of the loved ones, I pondered philosophically.

Just when everything seemed hunky-dory with stars in our eyes, hubby dear developed some 'work' pangs and sought to put his office expertise to some good use at home as well. So, he made a plan to streamline the 'home affairs' including his study room and my kitchen.

The personal papers had suffered neglect all these years and needed to be resurrected gradually and put in their place. Out came the unkempt papers, various receipts, bills, certificates and the degrees from the dif-

ferent nooks and corners, drawers and the shoddy files. More the papers came out, the more irritated he became and hence, more tense and charged the atmosphere.

It was as if he had opened a

Pandora's box and the solution seemed nowhere in sight. I offered my services. "For God's sake, haven't you been the 'efficient' in-charge of all these things all these years," pat came the sugary reply, with a

there. The utensils had turned black, the dusters were dirty and the stacks overcrowded. The menu was based on junk food and could prove to be a serious health hazard. Steaming the vegetables was a better op-

Homely truths

Suchita Malik does not want her husband to take leave from office



touch of venom. Stung deeply, I made a hasty retreat. The more he worked, the more we shuddered. The whole exercise had turned into a nightmare. The only respite we had was the time he frequented the gym in order to 'streamline' his long neglected body. The rigorous schedule he followed and the meticulous attention he paid to the minutest of details in everything made us hang our heads in shame.

The next casualty was the kitchen. Nothing seemed to be in order

tion rather than deep frying them etc... gosh, his list of suggestions was endless.

The children were next target. Their syllabus was scrutinised thoroughly and their timetable set for each subletc. The first few sessions included an inspection of their notebooks which was followed by a big lecture on the importance of having a neat handwriting, a regular schedule of studying as well as a disciplined life.

However, they swallowed a bitter pill thinking that the grim ordeal would soon be over as his much-dreaded leave was coming to an end.

He was extremely happy and chirpy one fine morning and we presumed it was the thought of joining his office again. When asked, he dropped a bombshell by declaring that he had extended his leave for the next fortnight since he was having a hell of a good time at home.

"Oh No, Papa! Not again! Go back to your office, please!" shouted the children at the top of their voice. Unable to fathom the reality of the situation, hubbly deary stared back at us in utter disbelief!