Recently a discussion meeting was held on the subject of higher education in the country with particular emphasis on teaching biology at Garhwal University, Srinagar in Uttaranchal. Prof Asha Chandola-Saklani the zoologist was the convener and she had invited teachers from Delhi University and the Banaras Hindu University besides me as discussants. The students of the MSc class actively participated and there were many surprises in store for me. The first surprise was how articulate and how well-informed the students were. There was, generally speaking, an awareness of the training programmes in the various parts of the country. There were among them students who had qualified for the Summer Research Fellowship Programme of the JNCASR and at least two of the men students were planning to appear for the IISc, NCBS and JNCASR interviews in June 2003. Understandably, in personal conversations they were anxious about employment opportunities in India given their background. All this was in marked contrast to my experience with a batch of students at Garhwal University in 1994 who were very shy, withdrawn and not very participatory. May be the change was effected by the dynamic programmes of teaching Asha Chandola-Saklani had introduced with the active assistance of the UGC. This is not being written with any degree of condescension. I am plainly pitting the performance of the zoology students in this remote area with that of students in the state universities in the south.

I felt very flattered that the students were avid readers of Resonance. When I referred to an article that appeared in it in 1996 they looked unfazed and told me that they would look it up. Which means that they were reading Resonance from its inception. Another feature I noticed was that the two days programme and events were all handled by the students. In fact one of the bolder boys told me he was planning to become a DJ if he can. I thought that was uplifting.

It is heartening that even students studying in universities in remote areas can be highly motivated, enterprising and also read Resonance.