Editorial

S Mahadevan, Chief Editor

“Syllabi are academic straitjackets used by teachers to see what they do not have to teach and by students to find out what they do not have to learn”

These are profound words of Prof. M K Chandrasekaran, an outstanding biologist, a brilliant teacher and mentor, and an extraordinary human being, who is being honoured in this issue of Resonance (of which he was the Chief Editor from 2003 to 2005). Trained as a zoologist, MKC (as he is fondly referred to by many of his students and colleagues) blazed a trail that is different from the path taken by most traditional zoologists. Though terms such as biological clocks are a part of common vocabulary today, only a few decades ago, topics such as biological rhythms belonged to the fringe areas of research. Contributions by many pioneers including MKC transformed it into a challenging and sophisticated scientific discipline. The conceptual framework of chronobiology, shaped by their efforts, was complemented by the work of geneticists and molecular biologist that led to the identification of ‘clock’ genes and the way they function, reinforcing the need for an integrated approach to solving problems in biology. Articles in this issue highlight the enormous depth and breadth of MKC’s intellectual achievements.

Such original contributions to science are possible only if science students are released from the straightjacket of syllabi and are encouraged to think out of the box. The sunny mornings spent at Madurai Kamaraj University observing the flowering rhythm of Ixora indica under the guidance of MKC are still fresh in my mind. He and his wonderful group of students saw to it that post-graduate students are taught basic biology in a manner that conveys the thrill and excitement of the subject. His passion for research and teaching as well as his wit and humour come through in his essay reproduced in this issue. He will remain a source of inspiration for many generations of teachers and students.