

**MIT-SOG IS TEACHING POLITICS AND THE ETHOS OF GOVERNING PROCESSES TO FUTURE LEADERS**

# A course that prepares students for ACTIVE POLITICS

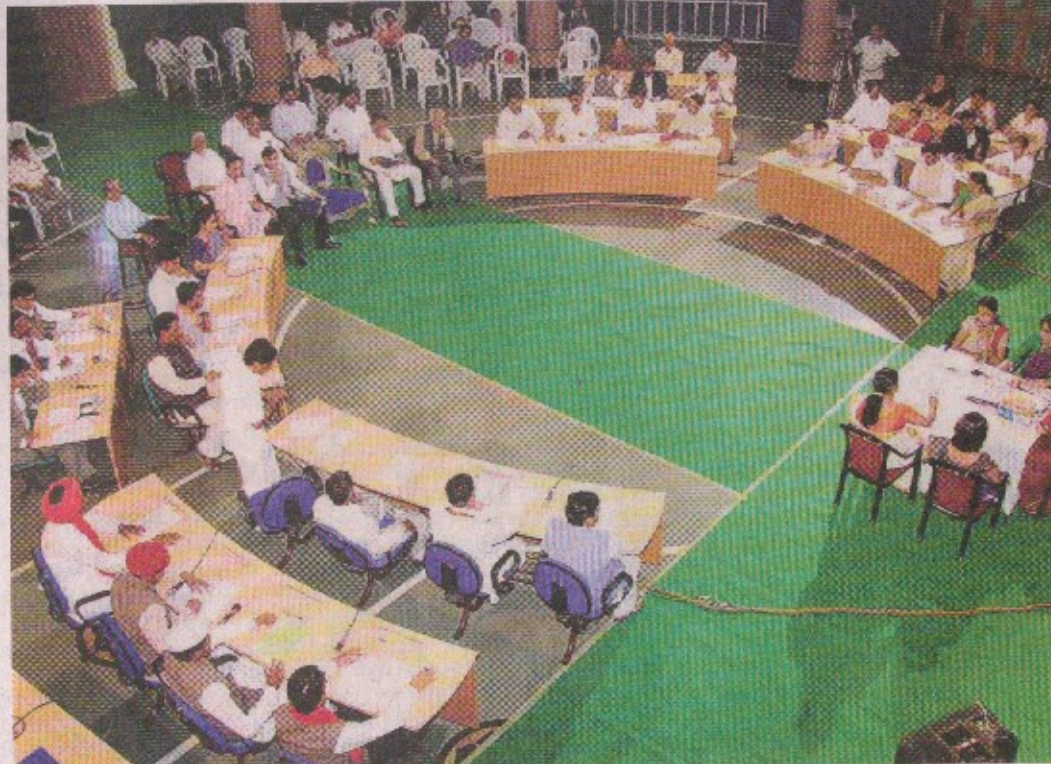
**Rajesh Rao**

Dedicated to the task of creating political and governmental leaders with a commitment to nation building, the Maharashtra Institute of Technology — School of Government (MIT-SOG) imparts the knowledge of Indian governmental and political processes to students in the city.

It inculcates leadership qualities along with a sense of national pride and democratic values through its one year full-time Masters Programme in Government (MPG), the first-ever professional leadership postgraduate programme, for a career in Indian politics and government.

"We have only one batch accommodating 60 students every year. Since we started in 2005, we have been able to select only 35 to 40 genuinely interested students per year, after our entrance tests and interviews," said course head at MIT-SOG, Ashish Lal. There are around five to 10 girls who join this programme every year, he added.

"We are more of facilitators than a teaching faculty. Each session is interactive, with little theory and more practicals," said associate faculty at MIT-SOG, Vanisree Ramanathan. While choosing this course,



A mock Parliament session at the MIT-SOG; (top right) students at the institute.

the student's expectation of what he wants to pursue as a career is also important, she said. The MPG programme is different from the Masters in Social Work (MSW) and though half of the students join politics, there are others who join non-governmental organisations (NGOs) or Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) programmes of private sector companies,

—Poornima Pradhyumna

“We want to bring a change, but most of us don't know how. It is possible only if you are a part of the system. The course makes us think about what we need to do.”

informed Vanisree. Looking at the MPG programme as an opportunity to broaden her horizon and interaction with people, Poornima Pradhyumna from Bangalore — who is part of the 2009-10 batch — said that this is a good starting point to join active politics.

"We want to bring a change, but most of us don't know how. It is possible only if you are a part of the system," she said. Women empowerment is one of the vital issues that she wants to work for at the end of the course. Talking about the unique course, she said, "It makes us think for ourselves and what all we should do."

Another student, Amit Garg from Rajasthan, has a degree in computers and aims to get into active politics. "Today, everyone looks at politics as a dirty game, which is not wrong. The politi-



cians have made politics caste-based to get votes for their own benefits. We have to get rid of crime, corruption and terror," he said. He said that this course would make him mature enough to reach the people and interact with them.

A computer application graduate from Jharkhand (Dhanbad), Kushal Anurag said that this course would help him get through the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) entrance examination.

A graduate in political science

from Delhi University Pinak Baruah, who is from Assam, said the course is co-related to political science. "It is more of an experimental learning, giving me many dimensions and providing a picture of the situation at the ground level," he said. Devendra Pai from Mumbai, who is also a political science graduate and part of the current batch, informed that he chose the MPG programme for practical application of the theory part, which he had learnt in his graduation.

## ABOUT THE MPG COURSE

A part of the Maharashtra Academy of Engineering & Educational Research (MAEER's), the MIT group of institutions in Pune, MIT-SOG, is the first institute of its kind in India. It provides training in government activities, which include parliamentary practices, judicial practices, Constitution of India, Indian economy, democratic system, and other relevant subjects.

The MPG programme also includes witnessing Parliament proceedings of the Lok Sabha and Rajya Sabha in Delhi. To get a comparative know-how of the government systems of other countries, the curriculum includes over three weeks of international study tours to various European countries.

To be relevant to the current political environment in the country, besides the academic curriculum, there are additional activities and local study tours to the gram panchayat, zilla parishad, corporation, state assembly, model villages and other relevant places. The institute also has a provision for enacting mock Parliament sessions.