

Jnana Prabodhini Competitive Examinations Centre, Pune.

**Celebrating journey of its alumnus
on account of
Tridashakpurti Varsha 2025-26
(30 years of establishment)**

Shri. Ninad Deshpande

- Presently serving as the Head of India's office in Taipei since January 2026
- IFS, 2005 batch- CFL (Compulsory Foreign Language) Chinese & JPCEC Batch 2001-02
- National Council on Vocational Training - Tool & Die making
- B.A, M.A, M. Phil (Pol Sci - Thesis on SAARC) - Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, Pune
- PG Diploma in Human Resource Management - IGNOU
- Former Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative Permanent Mission of India to the UN & other International Organisations, Geneva
- Earlier Served at Indian Diplomatic Missions in China, Bangladesh, Singapore, Switzerland (UN & WTO)



Background:

Ninad Deshpande is an Indian Foreign Service officer from the 2005 batch. He is currently serving as the Head of India's office in Taipei.

Ninad comes from a middle-class family from Navi Mumbai. His father worked at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre as a mechanical draughtsman, while his mother is a homemaker.

First Job and Parallel Education

The Beginning

Due to family circumstances, after completing the 10th standard, Ninad moved from Mumbai to Pimpri, Pune, where he lived in a hostel.

He pursued a four-year full-term residential technical apprenticeship at Tata Motors (then Telco) in Pune and received the National Council for Vocational Training (NCVT) certification as a Tool & Die Maker. This period marked the start of an unconventional academic journey and a phase of self-discovery.

During this phase—beginning with his Telco apprenticeship days—he became associated with the Vivekananda Kendra (VK) after participation in their residential camp at Kanyakumari. After returning to Pune, he actively engaged in VK activities at the Pune and Chinchwad branches.

He also became involved in the rural development work of Jnana Prabodhini (JP), conducting weekly classes in villages across the Pune district. Many VK activities were conducted in JP spaces, which acquainted him with JP's values. He particularly remembers humming the JP song "*Roop Palatoo Deshache.*"

His association with VK and JP also motivated him to volunteer in the earthquake relief efforts at Anjar in the Bhuj district in January-February 2001.

Those days left an indelible mark on his youth—filled with energy, idealism, and a sense of purpose. The supportive environment and mentorship he received during this period shaped his personality and provided a strong foundation.

Parallel Academic Growth

Alongside his work at Telco and his social activities at VK and JP, Ninad's interest in the humanities continued to deepen. He was consistently drawn to subjects such as history and political science. To pursue these interests, he enrolled in correspondence studies and completed a Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth. His strong performance earned appreciation from teachers such as Shobhana Tirthali ma'am, Neelima Kulkarni ma'am, and members of the correspondence program team.

By this time, he had already secured a permanent job in the Light Dies section of the Production Engineering (PE) Division at Telco as a Tool & Die Maker (Operator). Like many of his peers, he also enrolled in a diploma in engineering at Government Polytechnic. However, when his diploma and BA examinations clashed, he chose to continue with the BA, following his inner calling.

While still employed, he completed an external Master of Arts (MA) degree from Pune University. Later, he began an M. Phil program in International Politics at Tilak Maharashtra Vidyapeeth, which offered flexibility to working professionals. His research focused on SAARC and China.

During his time with VK, his friends and mentors, including Richa Zope and Mukta Dhawale, recognized his growing interest in the humanities and his dedication to social work. They encouraged him to begin preparing for the UPSC examination, assuring him that even if he did not clear it, the preparation would provide a strong foundational base—valuable even for research-level academic work—given the extensive breadth of the UPSC syllabus.

Embarking on the UPSC Journey –

The natural choice for UPSC preparation was **JPCEC**, due to his ongoing association with rural development activities and his frequent visits to JP, located just a block or two away from the VK Pune branch. He still recalls his introduction to **Viku Sir** and **Savita Tai**, as well as the interview conducted before his induction into the JPCEC UPSC batch. For one year, Ninad commuted by bicycle and bus from his workplace in Telco Pimpri to JPCEC in Pune for evening classes.

Ninad fondly remembers the strong study group he was part of at JPCEC, which they had named “**G7**.” He carries warm memories of the upasana sessions, lively group debates on the ground floor, and the extra classes conducted by seniors. The discussions on current affairs helped him overcome his inhibitions about speaking in English, especially coming from a vernacular-medium background.

A couplet from Savarkar’s poem—

“ गुण-सुमने मी वेचियली या भावे । की तिने सुगंधा घ्यावे, जरि उद्धरिणी व्यय न तिच्या हो साचा । हा व्यर्थ भार विद्येचा ”

(roughly translating to: “I collected these virtues/knowledge like flowers, so that they can be offered to motherland ; if they cannot be utilized so , the burden of this knowledge acquired is useless.”)

—was handwritten and placed on his study table by Ninad to inspire himself and to stay mindful of the deeper purpose behind his efforts.

Over time, especially after failing his first attempt at the 2002 Prelims stage, he understood the level of focus and rigor required. He took a gap year from the exam, while concentrating on self-preparation to save commuting time, and found strong support in his newly wedded wife, **Trupti**, who was also a civil services aspirant and belonged to Chanakya Mandal. Their combined efforts finally helped Ninad clear the UPSC in his second attempt in 2004-05.

While he was preparing for M.Phil., his course guide, **Dr. Khare Sir**, inspired him to attend the January 2004 SAARC Summit in person. After a Herculean effort—camping in Delhi for days and navigating the corridors of the PMO, MEA, and Parliament—he secured accreditation as part of the journalist delegation representing *Daily Kesari*. Ninad visited Islamabad to cover the SAARC Summit. His first ever journey by aeroplane and first ever visit outside India. Seeing the Foreign Service in action firsthand confirmed his resolve to opt for **IFS as his first preference**.

Becoming an Indian Foreign Service Officer

Ninad cleared the UPSC examination in 2005, securing the 56th rank. The 100-day Foundation Course was a unique experience for him, especially given his non-college, working background. The training at Mussoorie and later at the Foreign Service Institute (FSI) in New Delhi proved deeply rewarding, as Ninad could finally witness how the subjects he had studied for the exam were applied in real-world practice.

Diplomatic Beginnings in Beijing

Ninad's first posting after training was in Beijing from 2007 to 2009, serving as a Third Secretary. This is where he along with 2 other batchmates learned the language, cramming 4 semester worth material in 3 semesters and in addition learning specific strategic, political vocabulary and simplified Mandarin characters. One needs to comprehend about 3000 characters to read a research article or editorial in a newspaper comfortably.

This period coincided with the 2008 Beijing Olympics, providing him a unique opportunity to work during a major global event. He observed the city's remarkable transformation: under decisive governance, Beijing, which was initially primarily Mandarin-Heavy, became largely bilingual (in road signs) for the Olympics. He also witnessed the city's strenuous efforts to control pollution.

Covering the Chinese Foreign Ministry's twice-a-week press conferences exposed Ninad to the workings of a host country's foreign ministry and introduced him to new diplomatic terminology, significantly contributing to his professional growth.

Shanghai: Insights and Diplomacy

Following his posting in Beijing, Ninad served in Shanghai from 2009 to 2012 as Deputy Consul General. The Shanghai posting proved to be a remarkable experience. In 2010, Shanghai hosted the six-month-long World Expo, during which the India Pavilion—featuring the largest ever free-standing bamboo dome—took months to set up and dismantle.

(<https://cgishanghai.gov.in/Event?id=237>,<https://www.china-briefing.com/news/shanghai-expo-2010-the-india-pavilion/><https://architecture.live/india-pavilion-at-world-expo-2010-shanghai-china-shift-sanjay-prakash-and-associates/>)

Thousands of visitors toured the pavilion, and high level dignitaries, including the President of India, the Chinese Premier, the Foreign Minister, and the Party Secretary of Shanghai, attended official events.



Ninad as Deputy Consul General welcoming Smt. Pratibha Patil, then President of India for the Shanghai World Expo 2010.

Apart from that, Consular work provided valuable learning experiences as well. One notable case involved two Indian traders who were held hostage in Yiwu, a major trading hub south of Shanghai. Ninad accompanied them to court hearings and successfully negotiated their release.

(<https://www.thehindu.com/news/international/indian-traders-in-china-to-begin-legal-battle-to-clear-their-names/article2860840.ece>)



Ninad with Mr. Wen Jiabao, then PM of People's Republic of China at the India Pavillion during Shanghai World Expo 2010.

Shanghai also had a strong presence of Indian companies, including banks, manufacturing firms such as Pune-based Thermax, and IT companies like Infosys. With their participation, the Consulate organized investment promotion events across major Chinese cities. This collaborative effort between government officials and corporate leaders aimed to project a

“Brand India” and attract investment. As a result, several Chinese companies, along with their vendors, invested in India, including in Ranjangaon MIDC.

Ninad’s work extended beyond commercial and consular responsibilities to significant political engagement and analysis, given the provincial autonomy in China.

China Division: Ministry of External Affairs, New Delhi

After his Shanghai posting, Ninad returned to India to serve as Under Secretary and later as Deputy Secretary (China) in the MEA’s East Asia Division. His tenure coincided with several key events, including the visit of Chinese Premier Li Keqiang in 2013, border incidents, and the establishment of the Working Mechanism for Consultation and Coordination on India-China Border Affairs, which involved both military and civilian officials.

Bilateral engagements were conducted in both India and China, including interactions between India’s NITI Aayog (then Planning Commission) and China’s Planning Commission. Given China’s significance in India’s foreign policy, it was a privilege for Ninad to witness firsthand how a delicate balance in this relationship is maintained through confidence-building measures. He emphasized that much of the work in such sensitive areas remains unspoken, underscoring the discretion and nuance required in diplomacy.

Bangladesh – Crafting a Golden Chapter in a Complicated Relationship

It was once again time to move on to a field posting—this time to another of our neighbours, Bangladesh.

Bangladesh, notwithstanding the rises and troughs in the bilateral relationship over past five decades and the ongoing situation, remains a converging point of India’s “Neighbourhood First” policy, “Act East” policy, SAGAR doctrine, the Indo-Pacific vision, and an important partner in the development of India’s northeastern region. Both neighbouring countries are bound by shared historical, geographical, cultural, linguistic, and social bonds. The bilateral relations are enriched by multi-faceted cooperation in the fields of trade, multi-modal connectivity, development partnership, security and border management, defence cooperation, education, capacity building, cultural cooperation and people-to-people exchanges.

There are nearly 70 ongoing bilateral institutional mechanisms between India and Bangladesh covering areas such as security, trade & commerce, power & energy, transport & connectivity, science & technology, defence, rivers, maritime affairs, border guarding, drugs control etc. There has been active cooperation between relevant agencies of both countries in police matters, anti-corruption activities and in countering trans-border crimes such as illicit drug trafficking, fake currency, human trafficking, border fencing, joint inspection of boundary pillars, and joint boundary demarcation, including of riverine boundaries etc.



Ninad with Indian and Bangladesh Ambassadors and other officials during the signing of Boundary Maps Strip Wise-an exercise which then facilitated exchange of territory between the two countries.

In 2015, the Protocol to finalise the India–Bangladesh Land Boundary Agreement was signed during Prime Minister Modi’s visit to Bangladesh. It resulted in the full demarcation of the boundary and the exchange of altogether 162 Indian and Bangladeshi enclaves in each other’s territories close to the border, along with a comprehensive exercise to determine whether enclave residents wished to move to their country or stay and become citizens of the host country.

Following the PM’s visit, a massive process to understand people’s preferences and facilitate their movement without any incident or distress sale of properties was carried out and completed in six months. The process was complex, involving the Census Commission, the West Bengal Government, the Ministry of Home Affairs, border forces, and missions on both sides, with at times even the PM-level involvement.



Ninad with Hon. Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi and then Hon. Prime Minister of Bangladesh Smt. Sheikh Hasina at Dhaka in 2015 during the re-writing of “**Shonali Adhyaya**” between the two nations.

PM Modi gifting to PM Sheikh Hasina, the wheel of INS Vikrant which played a stellar role in 1971 War.

A critical challenge was establishing proof of identity for enclave residents who had no official documents like Aadhaar or ration cards. They were Indians by lineage and residence but lacked formal recognition. The census data, which listed households and individuals in each enclave with a unique number, served as the base document. Based on this data, a document called the Temporary Travel-cum-Identity Pass was created and issued to each individual. This document functioned like a temporary passport, allowing travel between the two countries for three months. Upon reaching India, residents would report to the District Magistrate, surrender the pass, and receive Indian documents and settlement arrangements. Ninad was involved in designing this pass. This complex process of designing a document that served as identity for people who had none, while allowing travel for relocation, was unique and memorable. To play a role in the peaceful exchange of territory and people can be among the rarest and most rewarding experiences that a career diplomat can have.

(https://www.esakal.com/saptarang/vijay-diwas-2021-bangladesh-50-years-india-ninad-deshpande-writes-golden-mahotsav-pjp78#goog_rewarded ;

<https://www.orfonline.org/public/uploads/posts/pdf/20230724114114.pdf>)

Other important initiatives during this golden period of the relationship included the reinstatement of DC/DM clusters along the border. Since there is no natural boundary and communities on both sides interact frequently, the aim was to facilitate exchange and

resolve local issues at the district level. Working closely with the Bangladesh Foreign Ministry, ten clusters of districts were identified, and biannual meetings between District Collectors/Magistrates from both sides were organized. These meetings addressed everyday issues such as accidental border crossings, stray cattle, and changes in river courses, resolving them locally without involving the central governments.

Ninad also recalls the horrors of the 2016 Holey Bakery terrorist attack in Dhaka, which took place close to home, and the close coordination that followed between relevant agencies on both sides.

During this period, several initiatives were undertaken to improve connectivity. Illegal cross-border movement does not involve visas or official channels, but a large segment of the Bangladeshi population depends on India for medical treatment, education, festive shopping, and even entertainment. To support these genuine needs, the High Commission organized visa camps and promoted cross-border bus and train services, making travel more affordable. These steps also helped bring the North East closer to the rest of India.

As a bilateral political officer, Ninad served as the MEA/Mission point of contact for BSF–BGB, the Joint River Commission, and Narcotics Bureau interactions.

Singapore – Building Civilisational Connect and Entrepreneurial Bridges

Following Bangladesh, Ninad served as Deputy High Commissioner in Singapore. The Pravasi Bharatiya Divas (PBD) is celebrated alternately in India and abroad, and the 2018 Regional PBD for Southeast Asia was hosted in Singapore. The event sought to be impactful while remaining sensitive to the affiliations of citizens of Indian origin with their host countries and highlighted the significant contributions of people of Indian origin to Singapore and Southeast Asia, thereby fostering goodwill among local governments. Held at the Marina Bay Sands Convention Centre, the event attracted 3,000–5,000 participants daily over three days, with numerous Chief Ministers and Union Ministers from India in attendance.

(
<https://www.hcisingapore.gov.in/archpressdata?id=eyJpdil6ljF0dmRuc1NUMkgybDJqZW05SjVhOXc9PSIsInZhbHVlIjoirR1R3MW5oZDVZMUJTU1MzWHRZRzVRZz09IiwibWFjIjoirMDIxN2M2MjEwM2VmOTM1YWl4N2FiY2U3NzU5MzIxYzg4OWU2NmOxZWFiZjJmNTA0NzdhZTRhNTNkZWJlZjAxNyJ9>)

Recognizing strong links between Indian and Singaporean entrepreneurs, the “InSprenneur” — India–Singapore Entrepreneurship Bridge — was launched during this period. It brought together the strengths of both ecosystems and collaborated with alumni networks (IIT, IIM) and business associations.



Ninad Deshpande, Deputy High Commissioner, Singapore with Late. Smt Sushma Swaraj, then Minister of External Affairs, MEA Secretary (East), Smt. Preeti Saran and Dr. Vivian Balakrishnana, Foreign Minister of Singapore, during the celebration of Pravasi Bhartiya Divas in Singapore in 2018.

The High Commission also proactively engaged with Indian companies and various Singaporean ministries (Manpower, IT, Commerce, Foreign Affairs) to facilitate the smooth implementation of the Comprehensive Economic Partnership Agreement (CEPA), ensuring mutual benefit and maintaining market access.

The final period of the Singapore posting coincided with the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was unprecedented that a large-scale repatriation operation, typically associated with conflict zones, had to be conducted from a city-state such as Singapore. This involved compiling lists of thousands of Indian nationals wishing to return, understanding their destinations across India, and coordinating with airlines (Air India) and the Ministry of Civil Aviation through Vande Bharat flights. The exercise was intense and emotionally challenging, managed by a small team of Mission officials. Responding to numerous queries on social media while ensuring responsible communication, and providing relief through effective coordination, became key responsibilities.

(https://www.hcsingapore.gov.in/pdf/notice/Updated_Flight_Information_13aug.pdf)

Assisting Indian migrant workers, many of whom faced accommodation and food challenges in a first-world city, proved to be an unexpected difficulty. Observing Singapore's diplomatic response, particularly during the early days of the pandemic, was insightful given the country's vulnerability due to its small size and population density. The Mission also facilitated the sourcing and dispatch of medical supplies and API components to India during periods of shortage, requiring cargo flights and complex logistical arrangements.

Delhi 2.0 – Multilateral Engagements

Following two postings abroad, Ninad returned to India and served as Director, Climate Change, in the United Nations Economic and Social (UNES) Division, and, after promotion, as Joint Secretary in the Multilateral Economic Relations (MER) Division.

The UNES Division deals with UN bodies focused on economic and social issues, primarily based in Geneva (WHO, ILO, ITU, etc.), as distinct from political UN bodies mostly in New York. In the UNES Division, climate change was a key focus area. Ninad served as a Climate Change Negotiator at COP26 in Glasgow, concentrating on the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

<https://www.mea.gov.in/Speeches-Statements.htm?dtl/34466/National+Statement+by+Prime+Minister+Shri+Narendra+Modi+at+COP26+Summit+in+Glasgow>)

A major negotiation point involved establishing a Common Time Frames (CTF) for Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs), which are countries' self-defined pollution reduction targets.

https://twn.my/title2/climate/news/glasgow01/TWN%20Climate%20News%20Update_No15_15Nov2021.pdf)



Ninad Deshpande, Director, UNES, MEA
representing India at CoP 26 Glasgow,
United Kingdom.

The challenge was to balance the need for a common time frame for effectiveness and measurability with the principle of Common But Differentiated Responsibilities and Respective Capabilities (CBDR-RC), which recognizes countries' differing historical contributions to emissions and capacities to act. The negotiations led to the adoption of flexible time frames (five to ten years) for NDCs. Under this arrangement, countries could choose a time frame suited to their circumstances (for example, a country submitting an NDC in 2025 could have an end date of 2035 or 2040). This outcome was considered a successful balance, allowing developed countries to track progress while preserving developing countries' policy space and adhering to CBDR-RC. Ninad regards the achievement of an outcome on CTF at COP26 as a significant contribution.

In the MER Division, Ninad handled BRICS and G7 engagements. BRICS expansion occurred during his tenure, requiring extensive internal discussions and BRICS-wide negotiations on approach and expectations. Managing India's role and image during China's BRICS chairmanship (shortly after the 2020 border incidents and COVID) and during South Africa's chairmanship (a fellow developing country and IBSA member) required careful balancing of national positions with the Chair's aspirations.

[\(https://india.mid.ru/en/news/south_africa_hosted_the_first_sherpa_sous_sherpa_meeting_of_the_brics_countries_this_year/\)](https://india.mid.ru/en/news/south_africa_hosted_the_first_sherpa_sous_sherpa_meeting_of_the_brics_countries_this_year/)



Ninad heading Indian delegation in a meeting at the beginning of South African BRICS Presidency in January 2023 at Bela Bela , Limpopo Province.

For the G7, where India participates as an invitee, Ninad engaged with Germany and Japan during their chairships. This involved negotiating joint documents with guest countries, including one related to food security with Japan and another on society and democracy with Germany. The challenge was to negotiate documents acceptable to developed G7 nations while reflecting India's perspectives and positions as a developing country. The objective was to produce mutually acceptable outcomes. Handling these high-level summits and associated discussions on various issues provided Ninad with substantial multilateral experience.



Ninad (first from the right), as Joint Secretary Multilateral Economic Relations (MER) with Foreign Secretary, Vinay Mohan Kwatra (third from the right) and other MEA officials at a late night press briefing post G7 Summit at Munich, Germany.

Multilateralism from the Field – WTO and UN in Geneva

Ninad had the unique honour of serving as Ambassador and Deputy Permanent Representative (DPR) to the World Trade Organization (WTO) as well as the UN and approximately 40 other International Organizations in Geneva.

India's Mission to the WTO reports to the Ministry of Commerce. Over the past 30 years, the WTO has built a rulebook by consensus among its 160+ Members that governs about 75% of global trade. These rules cover areas such as trade facilitation (for example, customs clearance times and single-window systems) and Sanitary and Phytosanitary (SPS) measures, which regulate health and safety standards for agricultural products. They also

facilitate exports of Indian industrial and agricultural products across the world. WTO rules provide predictability, which is crucial for traders and countries.

During his posting, Ninad participated in the 13th Ministerial Conference (MC-13), negotiating its various outcomes, engaging in WTO administration, setting priorities, overseeing the accession of new countries, and briefly chairing the Market Access Committee. These were some of the highlights of his tenure.



Ninad during an introductory meeting of the new Permanent Representative of India to WTO with DG Dr Ngozi Iweala, Director General of WTO in Geneva .

In a brief six-month period as Ambassador and DPR to the UN and other international organizations, Ninad was involved in substantial multilateral activity across UNHRC, UNHCR, UNCTAD, ITU, ILO, UPU, IPU, WHO, CITES, WMO, UNDRR, and many others negotiations on the UNEP Plastics Treaty, the Minamata Convention, and the four-year UNCTAD Ministerial Conference with the Geneva Consensus also took place during this period. These engagements involved coordination with specialists from various line ministries.

A key task at the DPR level was ensuring the consistency of India's positions across this wide spectrum of multilateral forums and maintaining India's presence and influence. Ninad concluded his tenure with the successful hosting of the Global Summit on Traditional Medicine in India in December 2025.

Indian Foreign Service – The Crux

Ninad strongly believes that the Indian Foreign Service is — and will remain — a crucial service, perhaps even more important than before as India progresses towards being 4th largest economy and growing more than 7 times the present size in the next two decades.

With 20 years of service, Ninad reflects on his experience in the Indian Foreign Service (IFS). He cautions that many assignments and experiences are best left unsaid. It is also difficult to attribute any particular success or initiative to a single individual, as achievements are almost always the result of collective effort, particularly during the early years. Success often stems from a small, dedicated team of Mission officials operating with initiative and resourcefulness in a foreign posting, equipped with the tools of diplomacy and persuasion but without any enforcement powers.

India occupies a unique position as a country that is neither strictly developing nor fully developed, making its perspective especially important and requiring original thought tailored to its circumstances. Effective foreign policy delivers tangible benefits, ranging from maintaining market access for products like Nashik grapes to securing technology for vaccines, defence and emerging technology.

In this regard, Ninad acknowledges that the recent rapid changes in the world and the increasing profile of India in world affairs, has created a perception that existing foreign and trade policy resources may be inadequate. There is ongoing discussion about the need for more personnel and the expansion of India's missions abroad. However, he reassures that a calibrated approach towards the issue such expansion while maintaining necessary depth of expertise is already underway.

Ninad identifies the current focus areas of Indian foreign policy: promoting development partnerships, trade promotion (including operationalizing agreements and securing market access), rule-making in international forums, and rule enforcement (such as anti-piracy operations). Indian foreign policy now balances values and interests, moving away from purely dogmatic or value-oriented approaches. The current era is characterized by interdependence between globalization and national power, where countries negotiate the balance between global integration and retaining national sovereignty. The Foreign Service provides critical insight and negotiation skills to navigate this balance.



Ninad sharing his insights about “Diplomacy for Development” at the Annual Meeting of the International Forum on Diplomatic Training.

Looking ahead to the remaining 15 years of his service, Ninad reflects on the future of diplomacy. Quoting a senior colleague, he notes the shift in India’s diplomacy where negotiations now begin not from a position of need but from a position of immense potential. This shift fundamentally changes diplomatic tactics and behavior. Diplomacy today requires credibility, self-awareness, and respect. India’s increased involvement in rule-making is a significant development; international institutions such as the UN and Bretton Woods were not initially shaped by Indian perspectives, but today India contributes to shaping new norms and questioning existing structures.

The Foreign Service, with its unique bird’s-eye view of both domestic realities and international possibilities, is essential for this work. Ninad emphasizes the growing connection between global events and the lives of ordinary Indians. With increasing numbers of Indians studying, working, and living abroad, global developments have direct implications for families back home. The role of those who observe and interpret international affairs becomes ever more critical.

For Ninad, this underscores the promising future of the IFS. The Service continues its work of promoting good development practices globally, even sharing India’s experiences in areas such as water management (Jal Jeevan Mission) , healthcare and Digital Public Infrastructure (DPI).



Ninad with other 2005 IFS Batch Officers at the 10th Heads of Mission Conference at Kevadia, Gujarat.

The Unsung Heroes: Family Life Behind the Diplomatic Journey

The family of diplomat plays a vital role in supporting a career defined by frequent postings and complex assignments. Children are raised across different countries even continents, adapting to new schools, languages, and cultures, which fosters resilience but can also challenge their sense of continuity. Spouses often demonstrate remarkable flexibility, balancing their own careers, social obligations and household responsibilities. Inculcating the cultural ethos which essentially build this diplomat becomes a harder task to transfer into the next generation due to lack of supportive, nurturing atmosphere and ecosystem of family, friends and larger society. Imagine being the only family in the locality celebrating Gudhi Padwa, Ganeshotsav and Lakshmi Pujan (without fireworks so as not to alarm unsuspecting neighbours!). Still it happens with the same initiative and resourcefulness that a diplomat shows at the workplace. But with distant memories of light, sounds and delicious smells of festivities back home.

The family's, particularly spouse's support and reassurance allow diplomats to focus on demanding international engagements (even on Festival days). Despite the personal sacrifices, uncertainties, and distance from extended family, the encouragement and stability provided by the family form the cornerstone of a diplomat's professional journey.

JPCEC in the Future

Reflecting on JP and JPCEC after 30 years, Ninad offers suggestions for future focus. While discussions about projecting JP as a think tank and establishing broader collaborations are

welcome, he feels that more attention is needed on the civil services themselves. Drawing on Swami Vivekananda's idea of manifesting inherent potential, he observes that different services manifest their potential in different ways — some through power projection, others through discretion or innovation.

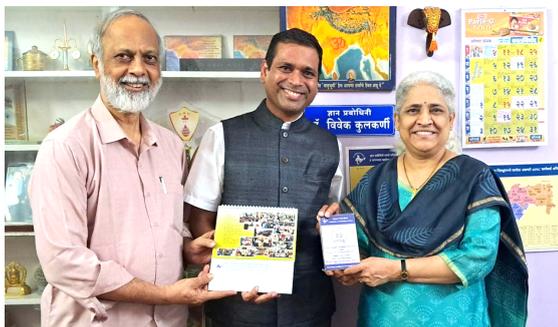
Ninad suggests that JP could focus more on recognizing and leveraging the contributions of officers in various specialized services beyond the well-known IAS, IFS, IPS, and IRS. Officers in audit, accounts, health, geology, engineering (electrical, mechanical, metallurgical), information, and postal services, among others, bring valuable expertise in areas such as technology, aviation, energy, infrastructure, telecom, and defence. Highlighting their roles and contributions is important for a holistic understanding of public service.

Other recommendations include strengthening alumni relations and considering the adoption of quality standards such as ISO 9000/9004 for operational efficiency and brand building. Given the national focus on entrepreneurship and skill development, he also suggests exploring collaborations with officer resources from Prabodhini in this direction.

Most importantly, JP has always emphasized character building. Ninad notes the intense dedication students put into competitive exams, often with no guarantee of success. Reflecting on his own experience, he observes that having a job (Plan B) and considering alternatives (Plan C/D) provided a sense of security. He suggests that JP could help students develop Plan B/C/D options, perhaps leveraging the alumni network, as the center moves forward.

These are personal thoughts and experiences of Ninad, shared solely as reflections and not to be attributed to any organization, its policies, or developments.

Photo Gallery



Ninad with Dr. Vivek Sir & Dr. Savita tai during his visit to JPCEC Office, Pune.



Ninad with wife Trupti and kids celebrating International Yoga day during his stint in Singapore.



Ninad with MEA Dr. S Jaishankar & then Permanent Representative of India to UN Smt. Ruchira Kamboj on the sidelines of IBSA (India, Brazil, South Africa) Foreign Ministers meeting.



Ninad with then Hon. Minister of State (Independent Charge) for Youth Affairs and Sports and Olympic Medalist Shooter Shri. Rajyavardhan Singh Rathore at Singapore.



Ninad, a fitness enthusiast and an avid Marathon runner at the Geneva Full Marathon in 2024.



Ninad with Shri. Abhinav Bindra, 2008 Olympic Gold Medalist during the Beijing Summer Olympics in China.



An old photo of Ninad with Dr. Vivek & Dr. Savita Kulkarni, Late. Vivek Ponshe (former Principle of Jnana Prabodhini Prashala) at JPCEC Office, Pune.



An old photo of Ninad & Trupti with Dr. Girish Bapat (Director, Jnana Prabodhini) & Dr. Savita Kulkarni (HoD, JPCEC) at Ninad's residence during his Home term at the MEA, New Delhi in 2013.