Distinguished guests, Faculty members, Dean Shingi, Dean Vaze, Dean Thorat and above all, my dear students.

A million years ago, there was a land. It was a land of learning. Many great sages stayed here to meditate. The land was only meant for learning, meeting, being joyous and being happy. The land had magic. It just needed the right people to come there and learn, and teach and breathe and rejoice! For a million years, the land waited. It waited for the right people to come in its arms and embrace the joys of learning and being happy. You young ladies and gentlemen are the people the land waited for a million years. Welcome to FLAME. The Land of learning.

Many years ago, I was a student much like you are. Many years ago, I had a dream. A dream that my father will change his opinion of me. My father didn’t think much of me. He thought, and rightfully so, I am going to be a good for nothing. I worked, all my life, to win my father’s appreciation. But when I thought it was time for me to go and tell him, “Dad you were wrong”, he was no more. He died in 1992. I sometimes wonder, if I had studied in an Institution like FLAME, my dad would have died a happier man.

I am sure, one of the reasons you all are here is because you want to make your Mom and your Dad proud of who you are and what you are capable of. You are capable. That I have no doubt about. But how does one convert one’s true potential into reality? You do that when the young mind is molded the right way. FLAME will help you mould that mind and convert the potential into a reality. But FLAME can only do it, if you want it as badly. All of us here, all the faculty, every one of them has committed himself or herself to making your learning, stimulating, enjoyable and most importantly challenging. Make the best use of the excellent faculty and Dean you have been provided.

You have access to one of the best faculty resource in the country. You have access to a well stocked Library. You have access to one of the best sporting facilities in the country; you have access to one of the most modern and beautifully designed campuses in the world.

That does not mean you are a consumer of FLAME’s resources. You are not a consumer and we are not your service providers. We are your mentors. Remember that always.

One of the best compliments I received was from one of the students who came for the prep program a few days ago. The lady said, everyone in the campus, from the laborer to the Faculty and the Dean are so friendly, helpful and approachable. We all do believe that we have to help you mould yourself into better, ignited minds. You will find people very approachable and friendly. But do not break bounds. We are not your surrogate parents. We are your teachers. We will come down harshly on those that break rules. Respect for the rules for the community you live in is a value we deeply believe in.

Any great University or Foundation becomes great if its 4 pillars are sound and evenly matched. They are learning environment, Faculty Resources, Research Capability and Student Resource. FLAME is a foundation that is growing. But we continuously make every effort to improve the four pillars. You are an important pillar in the way this university will shape up. But what differentiates good institutions from great institution are the values they are based on. FLAME is founded on the five values of Ahimsa, Guru Shishya Ethos, Human Dignity, Humility and Ecology.

My friend and guide, your founder , Nemish Shah once said something I have found extremely relevant, he said “never run after opportunities, simply nurture your dreams “ . What he says is very interesting. It’s like saying, become so engrossed with what you want to do that, one day the world will come and say wow; no one could have done it better!! You do it for us! Opportunities will chase you when you nurture your dreams. That my friends is liberal education.

I am then reminded of a story our Architect, BV Doshi told me. He said every morning he goes for a walk. There is a big Banyan tree there. The Tree is more than a hundred years old. Big trunk, well spread, green and blossoming. Every day he would talk to this tree. One day the Tree spoke to him. The tree said, why are you running? Look at me ! I am standing here for hundreds of years, yet I have given shade to so many generations..I have blossomed and I have wisdom, I have success and I have peace.. Being located, being local yet being global , being solid yet wise are the hall marks of good education.

Many employers today are shying away from pure skills. What they look for is awareness. What they are looking for are critical thinking skills . What they look for are adaptability. What they look for is ability to think creatively. Liberal education will help you do that. No Postgraduate Management Program in the country and perhaps in the world offers two crucial things we offer, one is the mix of courses in functional areas. You will be happy to know that the Flame School of Business offers about 47 courses to one class and the FLAME school of Communication offers about 43 odd courses and the FLAME School of Liberal Education offers 52 courses. This means that the 3 schools put together offer you about 130 odd courses! Show me one institution that offers these many choices! The second is that no other University offers you the whole gamut co academic activities that we offer. From the “Elite Leadership Program” to the “FLAME premier League”. So make the best sue of the opportunity that has been given to you.

To be liberated means to be at peace with yourself and your surroundings. To be liberated means to be able to liberate others from their pain and their misery. Each one you have it in you to be a leader, to be able to liberate others from their misery. And that my friends is the peach of Leadership. The future of this great nation is going to be in the hands of a select few. I dare say it is going to be one of you.

The greatest joys of being a human being is to be able to raise your, to be able to dream bigger. I always dreamt of creating an institution of higher learning. I come from a small town called Daund. I failed in my XIIth Std. Life seemed to have come to a standstill then. I could not even look into my father’s eyes and say “I am sorry Dad”. But that failure changed me forever. I dreamed that one day I will create an institution of higher learning. I don’t think there could be a luckier person than me. To have realized my dream. But we can’t have enough can we? So I dream more! I dream that one day, one amongst you will be Dr. Manmohan Singh, and I also believe that one amongst you is a potential Sachin Tendulkar, a potential M F Hussein, a potential Jawaharlal Nehru, and a potential Amitabh Bachchan. To all the potential heroes in you, I ask you to push yourself harder every day, to learn more and to give more and making your Mom and Dad truly proud of you!

I have always believed that you can never make the world happy by being miserable yourself. You must first learn to be happy yourself to be able to make others happy.

You are about to enter world of adults. It is a tough world .A tough world because, to be an adult means making choices and it also means taking responsibility for the choices you make. All of you will learn from the wrong choices you make. All of you will have to pay the price for the wrong choices you make. Live in this valley for the next 2 or 4 years, make your life time buddies here, enjoy, meet, rejoice, learn, question, challenge, raise the bar, breathe, see the vastness of the sky, but above all thank the land every morning. I do too, every morning. Thank you Ladies and gentleman and wish you a very happy stay at FLAME. We are truly happy to have you amongst us.