Respected Director \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, professors, academic and administrative staff members, and my dear young friends.

First of all, a heartfelt thank you for inviting me on this opportune occasion. l feel truly privileged to be invited here as a speaker/chief guest at the convocation ceremony of a prestigious institute like VNIT.

After all, all you students present here are among the crème de la crème, the chosen ones destined to shape the future of this country in the coming years. Mind you, when you go out in the world outside as an engineering graduate from VNIT, you would always be perceived through a different glass. The expectations from you are bound to be much higher than any other average engineer graduate. In your case, there would simply be no room for errors. You would be expected to be perfect in your job and up-to-date with your knowledge right since the day you walk out of this prestigious institute. And, living up to these expectations indeed is a big sense of responsibility. But then the invaluable experience gained during fulfilling these set of high expectations and responsibilities is exactly what will groom you for the future. Higher the expectations that you meet, the more you learn and the more confident you become.

I believe, each and every student present here has the skills and power to shape the destiny of India. You are blessed with the Power of knowledge. And as a wise man once said, “With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility”. So, build on the knowledge that you have received here and capitalise on it.

India, today, is at the cusp of a major transformation from a ‘progressing’ country to a ‘progressed’ country. I feel that one of the biggest strengths of our country is its diversity. We are lucky that our country is so diverse. It gives you the opportunity to explore diverse ideas, values, opinions and perspectives, which could come from different backgrounds.

I have generally observed that NITians are not like IITians who are intent on going abroad at the first lucrative opportunity that they bag. We all dream of earning more and leading a plush lifestyle with the best of the amenities at our service. However, how many of us have ever felt that we have a certain responsibility towards the country which somewhere has been integral in making us who we are and that it’s about time now to return the favour by contributing towards the betterment of the country in whichever way we can? It’s not necessarily about being patriotic but more about being righteous, being thankful. And as an engineering graduate from VNIT, the best way you can do that is by working in India and towards the betterment of India. I feel that the VNIT graduates who have stayed back in their motherland have played and will continue to play an integral role in laying the foundation of a Better India, Developed India.

I earnestly thank all the teachers, professors and the management at VNIT for their contribution in nurturing and shaping the careers of all the students over the years and thereby duly fulfilling their role towards the society and country by giving it such precious talent. And I sincerely hope that all you bright students present here will continue with the good work by living up to the expectations and exceling in your respective fields.

While your teachers and professors may have been integral in shaping your progress, it is your parents who are truly responsible for your existence, for bringing you into this world and, above all, for guiding you throughout your life to choose the right path and reach such a privileged position which many don’t achieve. So, be thankful to your parents who have given you this opportunity. Had it not been for them, you won’t have been here. Your success is dependent on their success. Keep remembering them.

We are all aware how technology, over the years, has been transforming everything around us. However, one thing that really astonishes me is the pace at which it is happening. Be it technologies like Artificial Intelligence (AI), Virtual Reality (VR), Internet of Things (IoT), machine learning, robotics or the latest gadgets and services that we come across in our personal day-to-day lives like smartphones and 24X7 Internet connectivity – all these technologies are changing everything, right from our day to day behavior and perception to our work culture, outlook and even the way we operate our business today.

While on a personal front, we are connected to the world 24X7, we can get information about almost anything from any part of the world at our finger tips. An analytic software can even predict your future buying behavior. In fact, I have even read that, in future, Google Assistant will be able to read and reply to your messages from WhatsApp and other apps. Considering the rapid pace at which technology is evolving, I sometimes wonder if this is affecting us negatively; however, when we look at the larger picture, I strongly believe that it is only helping us humans become better and better with our decision taking abilities by making us more and more informed.

However, when it comes to business operations, including the “Manufacturing” industry in which we operate, technology is not only changing the way internal processes are driven but also transforming the way external relations or communication with external stakeholders is being carried out. Internally, automation is replacing the common job done by humans earlier. Companies, under the pressure to always be a step ahead of their competitors, are deploying these technologies to bring down the cost and increase the pace of output. The whole point that I am trying to make here is that when you join an organisation, you will be expected to play the role of a creator. In the coming days, while the concerned technology will take care of the mundane job chores, the work force would be expected to work towards duly executing more ~~higher~~ jobs which cannot be replaced by machine. So the key to success lies in gaining more and more knowledge about the various ways to make the optimum use of these technologies and that is where your contribution and role will come into picture. If I have to give an example – In KBL, we are using a dedicated 3D printing machine (we are the only one in India to have such a machine) which is helping us reduce defects, improve quality of the product and reduce our manufacturing time. It is helping our engineers in trying new designs as well as in developing products with better efficiency and performance, thereby helping us serve our customers better.

Today’s technology will be redundant tomorrow, it will be replaced by a better one. Hence, you must find creative solutions to the business challenges that you may across and find ways to unlock and explore new business opportunities.

Today, USA & China are dominating the world primarily because they are able to create things which garner wide acceptance world over. If we wish to see India in the same league, it is the responsibility of bright engineers like you to create breakthrough ideas. And let me tell you, we are doing it. We all know how, over the past few years, ISRO has been achieving what no one has done before. The intellectual capital of India, which goes back to tens of thousands of years right to the times of Aryabhatta, Chanakya and the likes, is its biggest asset. I believe that we have always had the brain and the skills but somewhere have lagged behind when it comes to the vision and intent. That is where top engineers like you can make the difference taking our country to greater heights in the future.

Lastly, I would like to touch upon something which I believe is the fundamental attribute which differentiates a successful person from others, which is to follow your own path, be a passionate student for life who is always eager and yearns to learn and explore new things and, most importantly, to never be afraid of failure.

Always believe in yourself and back your capabilities. Do what you love, because if you love what you do, you will always end up giving your 100%. Don’t run behind money, it is something which will eventually come with your success. Be it Sachin Tendulkar, Abdul Kalam or Steve Jobs, all these legends simply followed their passion and did what they loved. When you love doing something, you will be passionate about it, and in the process will always strive towards exceling in it. But having said that, it is not easy as simply following your passion may come with certain setbacks or failure in the initial stage. But history tells us that the ones who remain focused and never lose faith in themselves and their goals have ultimately always tasted success. So, DON’T BE AFRAID TO FAIL. And this is all the more important during the initial stage of your career when you would be entering the arena without any particular baggage or tag and so can afford to make mistakes. In my life, I know, failures have always been my biggest teachers. So, try new things, bring new ideas to the table, test your ideas, and if you may fail, don’t stop or get disheartened but simply rise again and create something worthy. “THINK BEYOND, GO BEYOND”.

You are entering the workforce with whatever you have learned during the last 4 years. While your academic education will help you settle quickly in your chosen field, your attitude and ability to keep learning new things will help you in staying ahead with the times and performing consistently in the longer run. Your biggest strength is your young age. Don’t hesitate to learn from anyone, be it from your elders and seniors or even your juniors and other less experienced ones as you may never know when they can also teach you a true life lesson. I believe, what makes us humans different from other species is our attitude to keep evolving and keep improvising through continuous learning. One has to be a STUDENT FOR LIFE. So, make yourself mentally equipped for this transition by increasingly reading, learning and enhancing your knowledge.

Another aspect which is very important is humility. Be humble as it will keep you grounded and mentally-balanced. You will come across many ups and downs in your life and there could be times when you may find yourself on the other side of the fence; being humble will give you the ability to think rationally and positively and help overcome such situations. People like Gandhi, Abdul Kalam, Vajpayee and more recently Sushma Swaraj are remembered more due to their humility and there ability to think rationally.

At the end I would say, extraordinary achievements call for extraordinary efforts and extraordinary efforts can only be put in when your mind is free from fear (of failure), heart is full of passion and soul filled with divinity to make a positive difference in this world. Decide what you want to do with your life, be fearless and march ahead with full vigour- and the ‘World is Yours to Conquer.’