UNIACTIVITIES

Please, read books!

In this era of electronic media, book reading has been drastically decreased making lesser people attracted towards it. Recently, Ajmal Kamal, owner of City Press and the Editor of monthly Urdu literary magazine AAJ expressed his views on the decline of book reading culture and problems being faced by the book publishing industry at a guest lecture arranged by the Media Society of Institute of Business Management (IoBM). He threw light on the importance of books and book reading culture in our lives. Giving references from history, he said that since books started being printed from the 14th century, they have played an important role in the progress and development of nations. In today’s era, technology has completely destroyed the culture of acquiring knowledge from books, as students find it easier to Google everything. In this interactive session he further explained how electronic media diverts us from books. Media reinforces our thinking, it doesn’t give us choice – in fact, it takes away freedom from us. Sharing his own experience, Ajmal Kamal said that his magazine is being published for the past 20 years with a small readership of around 500 addresses which reflects the interest of people when it comes to reading. The societies that have developed themselves have gone through the difficult times by promoting book reading culture. On the other hand we have replaced our lifestyle with technology without reaching at that point where we can call ourselves developed. In this way our society is and will remain more ignorant. One more reason for the low readership in our country is that the number of books published is considerably less than it should be, because publishers in Pakistan works with very limited resources. They cannot afford advertisements. He compared it by citing an example of an Indian paper Malayalam which publishes seven million copies. While giving suggestions on how we can improve the status of book reading culture, he said lots of work needs to be done right from the grass root level.

- Umer A. Khan