

Manuscripts of La.Sa.Ra delight admirers

Centenary of the 'difficult' Tamil writer celebrated at French Institute of Pondicherry

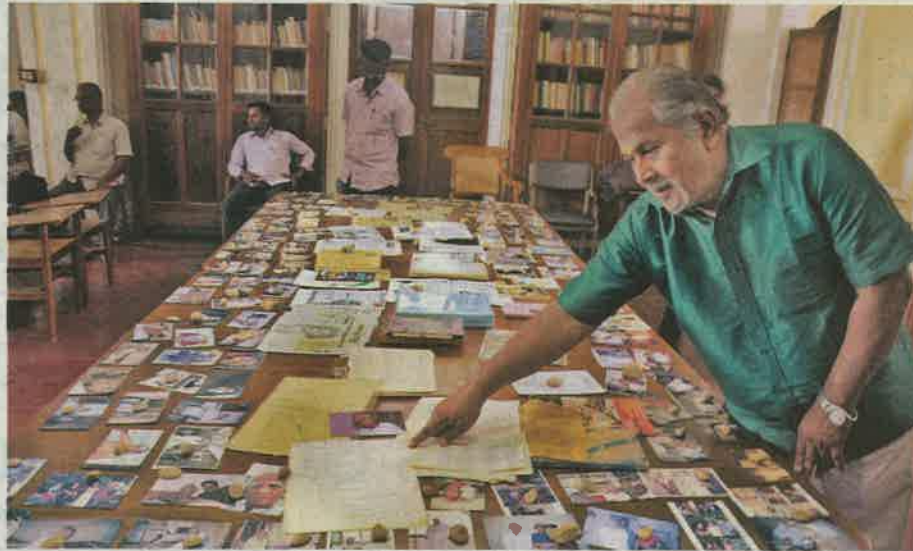
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PUDUCHERRY: Remembering the 'difficult' Tamil writer, the Contemporary Tamil Culture programme of French Institute of Pondicherry in collaboration with Tamil literary Journal 'Talam,' Chennai, celebrated the 100th year of Lalgudi Saptarishi Ramamritham, popularly known as La.Sa.Ra (1916-2007) in Puducherry.

People who attended the roundtable discussion on the La.Sa.Ra on Sunday morning were delighted to see the manuscripts of the writer.

At a time when even academic institutions take little effort to preserve the manuscripts of writers, including contemporary writers, the initiative of La.Sa.Ra's son La.Sa.Ra.Saptarishi provided a rare opportunity to the audience to view the works of the Tamil writer.

Ilaikkiyan, coordinator of the programme, showed the manuscripts which were displayed including some of his short stories like 'Guru,'



WELL PRESERVED: Tamil writer La.Sa.Ra's manuscripts displayed at French Institute of Pondicherry on Sunday. — PHOTO: T. SINGARAVELU

'Aval' and few pages from one of his novels were displayed along with the innumerable collection of photographs of La.Sa.Ra at the Main Indology Hall in the French Institute of Pondicherry (IFP).

"We preserved the manuscripts that were at home.

Many of his manuscripts were taken for publication and never returned. Since there were no Xerox machines during those days to take a photocopy of the manuscript, we lost many," said La.Sa.Ra. Sptarishi. The first copy of his famous work

'Janani' published in the 1950s was also exhibited. This story was hailed as a milestone in that genre for its imagination and technique. The photographs of his time spent with wife, children and grandchildren and moments of joy shared with his con-

temporaries and even film actors that captured the different moods of the writer were spread across the table for the public to view.

The Manikkodi Group

La.Sa.Ra, who hailed from Lalgudi in Tiruchi, worked in the banking sector till 1976. He started writing when he was sixteen and began his literary career with a short story in English in 1936. Soon after that, he switched over to Tamil. He was accepted as a writer of the Manikkodi Group in the 1940s.

La.Sa.Ra was known for his writing style and the complexity of language. He has published 300 short stories, six novellas, 10 collections of essays, a biography, some of which have become pillars of contemporary Tamil literature. La.Sa.Ra received the Sahitya Akademi Award in Tamil for his work *Chintanadi* (The River of Thought) that contains 40 reminiscences. His works include Abitha, Paarkadal and Kal Sirikkiradu.