

# Aravind 2013 Postcard 9



Saturday, Sunday 12,13 October 2013

## NAVARATRI FESTIVAL

## Person to Watch – Rajakumari Jeevagan

The Navaratri festival is a nine-day festival that has been underway, starting on my arrival:

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Navratri>

Navaratri is a big deal here, especially with students. On the last day of the festival, the tools that one uses in their work (for students that would be books, for surgeons that would be the operating microscope) are blessed. If you are a student, it is a day that the books remain closed!

Dr. Haripriya wanted her American charges experience Navaratri in a fun way. A friend of hers has a restaurant, and just as we decorate for the Holidays, her friend does as well. She has a meeting room on the second floor of her restaurant that she sets up with miniature scenes to tell the stories of Navaratri. Think Nativity Scene – but one that could accommodate all the stories that are in the Hindu narrative. Set up at a level that children (like me!) could enjoy! It was a great treat, to be introduced to Rajakumari, her friend.



Rajakumari has now a chain of three restaurants, and she is a go – getter. This festival spends the first 3 days celebrating the life of Durga (bravery), second three Lakshmi (wealth) and third Saraswarthi (knowledge). Raja has the bravery gene. Her quote: “if you are a path full of problems then you are on the right one”.

Shown are some of the 80 women who have come from very difficult circumstances to work with her and become empowered. In talking with them, the most common dream – to open a hotel; next a tea stand. One of the women wants to own an autorickshaw.

<http://www.thehindubusinessline.com/todays-paper/tp-economy/dr-rajakumari-jeevagan-entrepreneur-and-social-worker-madurai-velammal-college-of-engineering-and-technology-viraganoor/article989123.ece>



It was a great visit. More on the dolls, and Aravind's own festival, later

