

Actress, dentist, mother of two in India's first all women racing team

By Bharat Sharma

COIMBATORE: An actress, a dentist, a mother of two: Females from all walks of life have joined forces to form India's first all women racing team, which expectedly turned heads in the opening round of the JK Tyre National Championship.

Six women, including actor Manisha Kelkar and dentist Ritika Oberoi, became part of history when they drove the Formula LGB cars at the Kari Motor Speedway over the weekend, just fortnight after they spotted an online post on a talent hunt conducted by former national champion Sarosh Hataria.

"An odd women on the grid has become usual but I had been wanting to create an all women team to take on the boys. Having females in motorsport is seen as more of symbolism than substance. I want to change



A team of six women forming Ahura Racing, join forces to form India's first all women racing team, which expectedly turned heads in the opening round of the JK Tyre National Championship, in Coimbatore

that perception," Hataria told PTI.

Ahura Racing is the name of the team which came to being after Hataria hand-picked 12 women out of 190 who sent in their entries for the talent hunt organised here.

Six took part in the open-

ing round while the other six have been kept on standby and could get to realise their dream during the four round championship.

They have a long way to go before they compete with drivers from opposite gender but a chat with them makes it clear that these multi-

faceted females are in it for the long haul.

"I had never seen a race track until two weeks ago and I have just taken part in the national championship. It is a dream come true. And I am sure with time we will get there," Manisha, who is the daughter of reputed screenwriter Ram Kelkar, told PTI.

Like most of them, Manisha has taken time off work to pursue her passion.

"It has been a crazy two weeks. I have left shooting and come for this. Balancing racing with my acting career will be tough? but surely worth a shot," said the 32-year-old, who has worked in Hindi and Marathi films.

Diana Pundole and Natasha Shah are the two mothers in the 12-member squad. They did not get to race this week but are ready to wait for their turn.

"It has been one of the best two weeks of my life. Going forward I know managing