

Mumbai

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18 tribal women from Gujarat to run in Mumbai Marathon

ABHAGORADIA

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THEIR FAMILIES will miss them for five days, but a chance to wear new shoes and the prospect of taking part in an event that they have never heard of have brought 18 tribal women from Dharampur, a remote Gujarat village, all the way to the city for the Mumbai Marathon

on Sunday.

A majority of the women, aged between 19 and 50, are married. None of them have ever practised running or taken part in a marathon, but they are looking forward to their "dream run". The NGO, Shrimad Rajchandra Love and Care, have brought these women who belong to the tribal communities of Kukani and Warli from Gujarat.

Roopmali Mahala (50), the

sole breadwinner of her family, is confident that she will be fast on her feet. After all, she can roll out khakhras and make agarbattis one after the other.

A single parent to three daughters, 36-year-old Urvashi Deshmukh said she thought a marathon was all about fast running. "We are used to walking over 5 km every day; we are confident of finishing the race," she added.

Nirma Naik (25) is one of the few who has seen on television what a marathon looks like.

"I had never thought that I too will be a part of it someday," she said, adding that after coming to Mumbai she was excited to see a taxi and sit inside one, as she had seen them only in movies.