

## Spreading her wings and soaring high

Uma, 10 wants to be a teacher when she grows up. Thanks to HT, the class 2 girl is already at it, teaching her siblings



JASBIR KAUR- GENERAL SECRETARY, MATRI SUDHA

Having done B.A from Shaheed Bhagat Singh College, New Delhi, Ms Jasbir Kaur is one of the founding members of the organization . She now chiefs the administrative work of the organization .

**Mirroring change** : Her late start notwithstanding, little Uma (in the mirror) is a keen learner

Behind the green and blue doors of the houses of Nardan Basti — a notified slum in Lal Kuan, South Delhi — lie a grey reality.

Unlike more privileged children of her age, 10-year-old Uma does not wake up to a fully laid - out breakfast and neatly ironed school uniform. Instead, her daily routine goes somewhat like this: Wake up at 7. Help mother cook the morning meal. Feed four younger brothers. Help mother wash, clean and cook again. Manage younger siblings. Help mother cook...

Uma might be the third of seven siblings, but with her two elder sisters married and gone for the last four years and her mother Jayanti's hearing impairment making it difficult for her to communicate, a lot of responsibility has shifted on to this little girl.

Uma's father, Vikram Singh Thapa, who runs a nearby dhaba, leaves home in the wee hours of the morning, long before the children have woken up, and returns late at night, long after they have fallen asleep.

**And had it not been for the intervention of Matri Sudha**, the lives of Uma and her siblings would have continued in the same way.

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*Matri Sudha, a CRY project supported by Hindustan Times, works closely with the community, creating awareness about the importance of education. It also runs a centre in the basti where children are given basic education and vocational training so that they can get admission in schools .*

*The NGO serves over 1000 families every year and has been accorded special recognition by Hindustan Times .*