

# Family of the Month: March 2026

## *From Desperation to Empowerment: Tika Maya's Courageous Journey of a mother's love*



### **Family Profile** (Admitted in June 2025)

#### **Name of Beneficiary:**

Tika Maya Kunwar (30 years old, single mother)

#### **Children:**

- Ankita Kunwar (14 years old, Class VIII)
- Aakriti Kunwar (11 years old, Class VI)

**School:** Shree Jana Jyoti Secondary School

When Bahini Educare Foundation (BEF) first met Tika Maya in June 2025, she was a young widow struggling to survive with her two daughters in Myagde, Tanahun. At just 30 years old, her life had already been shaped by poverty, caste-based discrimination, addiction within the family, and the tragic death of her husband.

Today, with BEF's support, her daughters are back in school, food and basics for a dignified life are secured, and Tika Maya is slowly rebuilding a stable life for her family.

Her story reflects the harsh realities of caste-based discrimination that still exists in Nepal today, the many challenges that excluded women are facing, and the deep impact that our comprehensive, all-encompassing and sustained support can make.

### **A Childhood Marked by Poverty**

Tika Maya was born in Ghiring, Tanahun into a poor Kumal family, an Adivasi/Janajati (indigenous) community recognized as socially and economically marginalized. She grew up among eleven siblings: four brothers and seven sisters.

Her parents were farmers and daily labourers in other people's fields. They worked tirelessly, yet there was never enough to meet the family's basic needs. Life was a constant struggle with food-insecurity and fraught by uncertainty.

Education was a dream her family could not afford for all their children. Education and further studies remained a distant dream for Tika Maya and her siblings.

*As a child, she learned the bitter lessons, that survival came before dreams.*

## Marriage Across Castes and Social Rejection

At just 15 years old, Tika Maya fell in love with Tika Ram Kunwar from Myagde-5. He belonged to the Kunwar caste, a historically prominent Khas-Chhetri lineage deeply rooted in Nepal's political and military history.

Their love marriage crossed rigid caste boundaries. In the beginning, they believed love would be enough. *But it was not!!*

His family never accepted Tika Maya because of her Kumal background. Discrimination soon became part of daily life. The young couple lived in isolation, unsupported and constantly reminded that she did not "belong" to them.

Under family pressure, rejection, and growing economic hardship, her husband gradually began drinking alcohol heavily and later started using drugs. The man she once trusted slowly changed.

Even then, Tika Maya stood by him. She worked alongside him as an assistant when he drove tractors. Gradually, however, he neglected his responsibilities and the family began living in constant insecurity.

Tika Maya became the sole provider, doing daily labour to feed her children. She even took loans so her husband could go to India for work, hoping he would return with a new beginning for the family. Instead, he came back, broken, empty-handed and increasingly withdrawn.



He soon fell into deep depression and began isolating himself for days inside a locked room. Tika Maya tried desperately to take him for treatment, but he refused both medicine and psychological care. *Their home gradually transformed from a place of love into a place filled with fear and tension.*

## A Tragic Day That Changed Everything

In 2024, after a heated argument, her husband went to the market and bought new school bags for their daughters. He returned home, locked himself inside a room, and took his own life.

Tika Maya was in the kitchen when it happened. When she called him and received no answer, she broke open the door and found him hanging from the ceiling.

*In one devastating moment, she lost her husband, her partner, and the fragile sense of security she had tried so hard to protect.*

## Widowhood and Further Discrimination

After her husband's death, Tika Maya hoped for compassion from his family. Instead, she faced further rejection and humiliation, even during the funeral rituals.

She was forced to perform separate mourning rituals alone, grieving in isolation.

Eventually, the family divided the house and gave her a single small room, and even that only after pressure from members of the community. She was left to raise her daughters alone while still facing blame and insults from her in-laws.

Widowhood, discrimination, and poverty now combined into an unbearable burden.

## Struggling to Survive

Today, Tika Maya works as a construction labourer, carrying heavy bricks and sandbags from morning until evening. For this exhausting work she earns only three to four euros per day.

It is a hunger wage, and sadly the reality many women in similar situations must endure.

*Women like Tika Maya often face extreme hardship, hunger, social exclusion, and discrimination. Many become vulnerable to exploitation, prostitution, or even human trafficking. Without intervention, escaping this cycle of poverty is almost impossible.*

## BEF Embraces Tika Maya's Family

Recognizing their vulnerability, Bahini Educare Foundation welcomed Tika Maya and her daughters into the **Educare Family Program on 20 June 2025**.

BEF began supporting the family through:

- Education support for both daughters
- Clothes and hygiene materials
- Health care assistance
- Basic food support
- Counselling and emotional care
- Empowerment initiatives for a sustainable future

For the first time since her husband's death, Tika Maya felt she was not alone.

Her daughters returned to school with renewed confidence. Slowly, their fear gave way to safety, belonging, and hope.



## A Mother's Courage

Despite grief and hardship, Tika Maya works every day with one simple purpose: to ensure her daughters never have to live the life she endured.

*Softly she says:*

*"I loved my husband. I never imagined our life would end like this. But my daughters must have a better future. That is my strength now."*

Her life remains difficult, but today she walks forward feeling included, supported, and understood.

## Why Her Story Matters

Tika Maya's story reflects the painful reality faced by many women in Nepal even today.

Families trapped in poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion rarely manage to escape this vicious cycle on their own.

Through comprehensive support, encouragement, and empowerment, BEF provides a lifeline to families like Tika Maya's. We stand beside them until they regain stability, confidence, and the skills to live a respectable life and social inclusion.

Together, we can reach many more families living in desperation and help them move from darkness toward a life of independence and dignity.

Only together, and this with concerted and participatory action can we change the destiny of those who have long been voiceless and forgotten.

Thank you for your trust and continued support.

It's simple, It's simply BEF!!

With warm regards,

**Surendra, Raymond & Team**  
Bahini Educare Foundation

