Tata Tea Agni – Ghar Ki Agni: AI Journey

Award Category: Personalization – Long & Short Form Video

Why Should This Case Study Win a SMARTIES Award? (149 words)

In a country where 160 million homemakers go unrecognized for their unpaid labour, Tata Tea Agni turned personalization into an act of emotional justice. "Ghar Ki Agni" used AI-powered video intelligence to transform a single uploaded photo into a deeply personalized tribute video — unique to every homemaker's own face, activities, and life context.

Rather than a one-size-fits-all brand film, the campaign generated thousands of individually rendered videos, each with AI-detected emotional cues, face-personalization, and tailored voiceover narratives — delivered entirely through WhatsApp, India's most familiar platform, with zero additional app downloads.

By combining a nationally-loved TVC with hyper-personalized AI storytelling at massive rural scale, Tata Tea Agni proved that personalization doesn't require urban tech infrastructure — it just requires genuine insight. The result: record brand preference shifts and a 25% short-term sales spike, proving personalization at scale can move real business metrics.

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2. Strategy (584 words total for section)

2.a. Objectives (141 words)

Drive Deeply Personalized Recognition at Scale: Move beyond a single, universal brand film to generate individually personalized video tributes for homemakers across rural India, using AI to tailor each video's narrative, voiceover, and visuals to the specific person and activity depicted.

Maximize Accessibility of Personalization Technology: Deliver AI-powered personalized video creation through WhatsApp — a platform already familiar to homemakers — eliminating the barrier of app downloads or complex digital literacy.

Achieve Emotional Relevance Through Contextual AI: Ensure personalization wasn't cosmetic (just inserting a name), but contextually intelligent — with AI analyzing facial expressions, surroundings, and activity to generate a narrative genuinely reflective of that individual's life and effort.

Convert Personalized Engagement into Brand Metrics: Translate individual video participation into measurable uplift in Top-of-Mind awareness, consideration, and short-term sales for Tata Tea Agni.

2.b. Context (146 words)

In India, personalization at mass scale has traditionally meant name-insertion gimmicks — a first name dropped into a generic template, with little real relevance. For a brand whose entire proposition is "Josh Jagaye Har Roz" (igniting passion every day), this felt hollow against the real, unrecognized effort homemakers put in daily.

Homemakers are rarely a target audience for personalization technology; most AI-driven video tools in India are built for urban, tech-savvy, self-expressive consumers — not for a 45-year-old homemaker in a village who has never used a generative AI tool, and doesn't see her own daily work as "content-worthy."

The challenge was to build genuine personalization — reflecting a real person's real effort — using AI, while making the interface so simple that a first-time user with a basic smartphone and WhatsApp could participate without any assistance beyond a photo upload.

2.c. Target Audience (99 words)

The target audience consists of the estimated 160 million homemakers across rural and semi-urban India — women aged 25-55 who dedicate 6-7 hours daily to unpaid domestic labour, contributions rarely acknowledged in monetary or social terms. Secondary audience: their families (spouses, children) who would upload photos and initiate the personalized tribute on their behalf. Both groups are highly WhatsApp-native, moderately smartphone-literate, and emotionally responsive to culturally rooted, familial storytelling rather than overtly technological messaging.

2.d. Creative & Media Strategy (25 words per sub-section)

Creative Strategy: AI-powered video intelligence analyzed uploaded photos to detect emotion, activity, and context, generating personalized prose and voiceover narratives unique to each homemaker's story.

Media Strategy: WhatsApp-first distribution combined with on-ground village activations ensured frictionless participation, using QR-code scanning and real-time video generation to drive mass, guided engagement.

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3. Personalization Strategy (Detailed Component)

1. **AI-Powered Contextual Video Intelligence:** Each uploaded image was analyzed by AI to detect facial expressions, surroundings, and activity — determination, warmth, resilience — and translated into a personalized narrative and voiceover, rather than a templated overlay.
2. **Frictionless Delivery via WhatsApp:** Recognizing low digital literacy among the target audience, the entire personalization journey — name input, photo upload, video delivery — was built natively into WhatsApp, requiring no new app download, supported by on-ground booths guiding first-time users through QR-code scanning for real-time video creation.

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4. Execution / Use of Media

4.a. How did the execution or enabling technology help achieve results? (approx. 190 words)

The central execution challenge was building an AI system that could reliably personalize content from unpredictable, real-world rural photography — varying lighting, angles, and activities — while staying true to the brand's emotional proposition.

The **AI-powered Video Intelligence platform** analyzed each uploaded image for facial expressions, environment, and contextual cues, then generated a bespoke prose narrative and voiceover matched to the specific activity shown — whether cooking, tending children, or household chores. This technology directly enabled the personalization at the heart of the entry, ensuring no two videos were alike despite mass-scale production.

To manage unpredictability in AI-generated output, certain narrative elements were pre-structured from the original brand film, while AI dynamically filled contextual specifics — balancing creative control with genuine personalization.

WhatsApp served as the enabling distribution technology, chosen specifically because it required zero additional downloads or digital literacy — critical for reaching first-time AI users in rural India, and directly

responsible for the scale of participation achieved (25% of offline-engaged homemakers created a personalized video).

4.b. Execution — how was the channel/technology integrated into the overall marketing strategy? (approx. 190 words)

Technology was integrated as the connective layer between the brand's emotional film narrative and individual, lived homemaker realities. The nationally-released TVC (narrated by Ashutosh Rana) established the emotional proposition — "Itna Josh kahaan se laati ho?" — at scale, while the AI-WhatsApp journey made that proposition personally true for each participant.

On-ground activation booths across 100 villages served as the integration point between offline and digital: brand teams guided homemakers and their families through the QR-code scan, photo upload, and real-time video generation process, ensuring the AI technology didn't remain an abstract idea but became a lived, guided consumer experience.

This closed the loop between mass broadcast (film) and individual personalization (AI + WhatsApp) — with offline Mohalla Baithaks driving initial awareness and trust, and the AI tool converting that trust into a tangible, shareable, deeply personal artifact that participants could keep and revisit, reinforcing brand affinity well beyond the campaign's active window.

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5. Business Impact (448 words total for section)

5.a. Context (148 words)

Personalization technology in India's marketing landscape has largely remained an urban, English-first phenomenon — inaccessible to rural, vernacular audiences who make up the majority of the population. For Tata Tea Agni, proving that AI-driven personalization could work at scale for a genuinely underserved audience — homemakers with limited digital exposure — was the central business question.

The campaign needed to demonstrate that personalization wasn't just an emotional nicety, but a business driver: capable of shifting brand preference and consideration among an audience that had never been directly, individually addressed by a tea brand before. Success required proving both technological feasibility (can AI personalize at rural scale) and business impact (does personalized recognition translate into brand and sales metrics) across 100 activated villages representing roughly 1 million people.

5.b. Evaluation (150 words)

The campaign delivered decisive results across brand health and participation metrics:

Brand Preference: Top-of-Mind awareness moved from 19% to 25% — the highest ever recorded for the brand.

Engagement Scale: Across 100 activated villages (~1 million population), approximately 50% of homemakers engaged offline at Mohalla Baithaks, with AI-powered personalized video creation achieving 25% participation among this base — a strong conversion from awareness to hands-on, personalized brand interaction.

Brand Health Metrics: Market share moved from 8.5% to 10.7%; penetration increased from 4.5% to 5.1%; average monthly household consumption rose from 194g to 203g — confirming that personalized recognition translated into tangible category behavior shifts, not just sentiment.

5.c. Market Impact & ROI (150 words)

By making AI-personalization genuinely accessible to a historically overlooked audience, Tata Tea Agni proved that emotional relevance — not just efficiency — is where personalization technology delivers its greatest returns.

Business Growth: The campaign drove a 25% spike in short-term sales growth for Tata Agni over the previous period, directly linking personalized emotional engagement to commercial performance.

Cultural Resonance: The AI tool generated significant organic local news coverage, extending the campaign's reach and credibility well beyond paid media investment.

Category Precedent: By proving that personalization via AI + WhatsApp could work at rural scale, without requiring app downloads or digital sophistication, Tata Tea Agni set a new benchmark for accessible, meaningful personalization — demonstrating that the most powerful personalization isn't about complexity, but about making someone feel truly seen.