The Photoshop State:
Image Manipulation, Visual Culture and Electoral Politics in Digital India

Sriram Mohan
Department of Communication Studies
University of Michigan
Photoshop fails: Unsuccessful attempts to manipulate photographs

Altered Image of Narendra Modi Surveying Chennai Floods Published by India’s Information Bureau Goes Viral

Photoshop Helps Indian Minister Gather Crowd in Political Rallies
Setting the stage...

- Critically evaluate selected images
- Examine cultures of use of digital image manipulation tools
- Explore the ways in which the “Photoshop State” may be realized
Beyond typology...
YOU ARE THE UNBEATEN KING
YOU ALWAYS MAKE THE RIGHT MOVE
YOU ARE OUR CHAMPION

YESTERDAY
AMMA CONDUCTED
THE 7TH SOUTH ASIAN FEDERATION GAMES AT CHENNAI

TODAY
AMMA IS SPONSORING
THE WORLD CHESS CHAMPIONSHIP MATCH

TOMORROW
AMMA AS PRIME MINISTER OF OUR NATION
WILL SPONSOR THE CHESS OLYMPIAD WHEREIN
160 COUNTRIES WOULD PARTICIPATE.

FOREVER IN GRATITUDE
U.G.R. PRACHANDAN
DEPUTY SECRETARY MINORITY WELFARE
AMMA DR.
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

SOWBAGHYA

CHENNAI
Every party has its own protocol for which images you can use and not use.

We generally avoid people who ask for fancy items and only do it for those who can manage if there is trouble...we started doing this after the police came around and started asking about specific banners.

Velusamy, Photoshop Operator
சரவண 3 முதல் விழாக்காக சிவப்பு நோட்டு தண்ணீரேற்றல்

சுந்தர காமகேந்

.....தமிழக மாநிலத் தலைமையக்

எஸ். பிசாப்பிள்ளை

B.A., LL.B., MLA

எஸ். அருண்கிருஷ்ணம்

MLA

S.V. பிசாப்பிள்ளை சிவாஜியேராஜ்

எஸ். வி. பிசாப்பிள்ளை குமார்பிள்ளை

எஸ். வி. பிசாப்பிள்ளை அருண்கிருஷ்ணம்

M.பிசாப்பிள்ளை சிவாஜியேராஜ்

எஸ். சோமேந்தக் கிருஷ்ணம்

R.செந்தூர்யன்

B.Sc., M.A.B.L.,

M.பிசாப்பிள்ளை

எஸ். வி. பிசாப்பிள்ளை

B.A., LL.B., MLA

R.செந்தூர்யன்
I don’t think even the guy who invented Photoshop knows all the tools available in it. We’re discovering new things about it everyday. And we have to keep learning to go to the next level.

Now, if I want to learn animation, I have to take classes. I need to have a good system. Photoshop, I can figure it out myself with an old version.

David, Photoshop Operator
Browsing

We are always browsing the net for new ideas. We keep looking at Facebook, Whatsapp etc to see what the other parties are doing. Only by browsing do you know what the trend is, and only if you know the trend, you can survive.

Krishnan, Party Member
If you want a new setting, it will take 4 or 5 hours easily. So, party workers trying to get stuff done in bulk won’t try this. Only 1 or 2 in a 100 want special setting. In such cases, cinema cutout people draw these by hand and we just do the touchup.

David, Operator
Forwarding

Even as the design is getting finalized, JPEGs are forwarded on Whatsapp and spread within groups. What get forwarded? That which has something new or funny or useful. Everyone’s fate is determined by the mobile now.

Rajendran, Owner
In the classroom...

Build online archives of political posters, banners, wall paintings etc

Annotate with what is 'unseen' or 'unsaid'

Eg. Freedom's Ring
(done using Scalar)
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Thank you!