



ADDIS ABABA UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF JOURNALISM AND COMMUNICATION

**Social media to Promote Human Rights: The Case of
Ethiopian Human Rights Commission**

By
Alemseged Kiflu

June 2020

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A thesis submitted to Addis Ababa University, Graduate School of Journalism and Communication in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and communication

June 2020

Addis Ababa Ethiopia

Declaration

I hereby declare that this research entitled “Social media to promote Human rights: The Case of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission”, is my original work and has not been submitted to or examined by any other university. All the sources of materials used for the thesis have been properly acknowledged.

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This is to certify that this thesis is prepared by Alemseged Kiflu, entitled “Social media to promote Human rights: The Case of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission”. Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts in Journalism and Communication complies with the regulations of the University and meets the accepted standards with respect to originality and quality.

Signed by the Examining Committee:

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Acronyms

APF- Asia Pacific Forum

CEDAW- Convention on the Elimination of All forms of Discrimination against Women

CRC- Convention on the Rights of the Child

CSO - civic Society Organizations

EHRC- Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

ECOSOC- Economic and Social Council

FDRE – Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia

ICCPR - International Convention on Civil and Political Rights

ICESCR - International Convention on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

ICT- Information Communication Technology

NHRIs – National Human Rights Institutions

UN- United Nations

Social media to promote human rights;; The case of Ethiopian Human Rights Commission by Alemseged kiflu

Abstract

The objective of the study is to investigate how and to what extent The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission uses Social media to promote human rights. The study design is exploratory research and employed qualitative method. Open-ended questions are used to generate primary data. Secondary data was also obtained from document analysis of the Commission i.e. the Commission Establishment Proclamation_No.210/2000, the Commission communication strategy and the official Facebook page content of the Commission. The purposively selected respondents from the Commission's head office answered the open-ended questions. The data analysis used content analysis and thematic analysis. The analysis of the data indicates that Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is using Social media not only to promote human rights, but also for other communication purposes. However, enough attention has not been paid to the Social media. It is not clearly stated who is responsible to produce contents, and in what format? Who is responsible to update the page and, at what time or on what regular bases? This has resulted in the preparation of contents without guidelines and clearly delimited responsibility. No response is given to the audience comments. In general, the Commission is using Social media for the past three years without any Social media policy, strategy, and guideline to administer and manage the media for greater utilization, proper resources were not allocated in terms of trained experts, material, and financial and technological expansions. This is indicative of the fact that enough attention were not paid to the Social media of the Commission so that for it to effectively promote human rights. Based on the findings of this study recommendations are suggested, which are the Commission would do a great deal of good to itself if it considers coming up with Social media policy, strategy, and guidelines with the view to administering and managing properly for effective use of the platform.

CHAPTER ONE

1. Introduction

1.1. Background of the study

Media is at the center of every communication activity undertaken between people and organizations. Particularly mass communication builds itself on the kind of media used between the sender and the receiver. However, all media are used to facilitate the purpose of communication, which is to educate, to inform, to entertain, and to promote. Following the advancement in science and technology, media also been undergoing changes over the years. These days the progress in information communication technology has brought about a significant impact on the mass communication area.

As a result, the print and broadcast media have been reshaped in to a new form of media, which is commonly known as a Social Media. These media have so much become vital tools in shaping public opinion and setting a social, political, and economic agenda. So much so, the swift growth of Social media brought about unique ways for people and organizations including national human rights institutions of directly connecting and sharing information among and between each other. Hence, Social media become sites where people interact freely, sharing and discussing information about each other and their lives, using a multimedia mix of personal words, pictures, videos and audio (Bruce and Douglas, 2008. p. 27).

As the United Nation Declaration on Human Rights, education and training: article 6 explains, to the effect of promoting human rights, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) have therefore a responsibility to “capitalize on and make use of new information and communication technologies, as well as the media” to raise public awareness of the human rights concerns facing their communities. To play this role effectively, NHRIs need to understand the way the media operate, and the different audiences they reach working with the media can be a very effective way to reach a large number of people with information about human rights, especially given the financial constraints that many NHRIs face. In such a case, not only is media coverage “free”, it is

also generally seen as being more reliable than information presented in advertising or promotional campaigns (APF, 2014).

What is more, huge amount of Social media data are generated every second which represent a paradigm shift in publishing from largely carefully edited data to user-generated content which, as a result, has rapidly changed the way people exchange and consume information as well as the way they communicate. Social media such as Facebook, Youtube and Twitter are ideal platforms to push such contents to the world (Poesio et.al 2016). This paradigm shift has changed, not only the utilization of media and content production but also offered new opportunities in the promotion and protection of human rights. One such opportunity has been the potential to more easily detect and document human right violations. In fact, these developments have already resulted in changes of how human rights organizations work not only in promoting human rights but also in identifying evidences of human rights violations and addressing them as well.

Social media can serve as a powerful platform in launching various human rights campaigns on a large scale. They used as a strong medium for expressing people's opinion in the digital age. They have not only helped in the circulation of views and ideas that denounce human rights violations but also in creating human rights awareness among people and triggering many campaigns to shun human rights violations. Sometimes a single expression of idea on Social media becomes the voice of many voiceless in the world (Lisa & Mathur, 2019). This implies that studying the role of Social media in promoting human rights is topical and of paramount importance for further use in the future.

The interactive and participatory nature of Social media is getting all the time more attention on the part of not only individuals but also governmental and non-governmental organizations in communicating with their customers, stakeholders and the public at large. Much more so, after the well-known social networking sites such as Facebook, twitter, Instagram and linked- in (ACCAN, 2007) have been designed and came in to play as tools in the communication process. The role and share of these Social media in the inter-personal as well as in mass communication process is aggressively increasing all the time, so much so, to the extent that government organizations and states men could not but create for themselves a page to effectively communicate with the public.

Similarly, the audience, the public at large is shifting from the traditional media to the Social media for the very reasons that the latter have been readily accessible regardless of time and place, used for two-way communications in which the receiver can directly forward comments or opinions on the spot to a single information obtained from various sources or one presented from various perspectives.

Governments have also been keen on employing Social media as communication tools with the public for the obvious reasons. Social media have been capable of reaching the people wherever they are; expanding their outreaches to new and diverse audiences, facilitating interactive communication and community, putting a human face on government, reducing duplication, saving time and money and leveraging unique characteristics of emerging channels (USEPA, Introduction to Social Media). Therefore, have many institutions including the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) been employing Social media in order to effectively communicate with their stakeholders and the public at large.

There are varieties of organizations, CSOs and other interested groups work on human rights in Ethiopia. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is established as an autonomous organ of the federal Government having its own juridical personality (Proclamation-No. 210/2000 article 3). The Commission is mandated to promote human rights. The Commission has the duty to educate the public using the mass media and other means, with a view to enhancing the tradition of respect for, and demand for the enforcement of human rights upon acquiring sufficient awareness regarding human rights violations (Proclamation No. 210/2000 Article 6/3). In addition, to that effect, mass media - be it print, broadcast, or Social media have been instrumental in educating the public by informing, raising awareness, and/or by mobilizing society to stand for the practice and causes of human rights violations of citizens.

As indicated above; the Social media which emerged as a new media in the mass media /mass communications technology; could not be missed on the part of organizations to make the most of it in the promotion and protection of human rights. It therefore follows that the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as part of its duty has been making use of the mass media (both print and broadcast) to educate the public and demand for the enforcement of all human rights.

Similarly, in recent years, Social media have also been drawing the attention of academic researches and studies. Especially academic studies in journalism and mass communication have been more intent upon studying the function of Social media and its impact on mass communications and journalistic activities. This is also true with the Addis Ababa university school of journalism and communication, which has been conducting several studies on the usage of Social media from several perspectives. Such as Social media as a public relations tool, Social media as a source of news, Social media addiction and the use and management of Social media so on and so forth.

In fact, what makes Social media even more worth studying is the fact that the more an organization understands the nature of the media; the better it makes the most of it in realizing its mission. So does the study into the use of Social media in the promotion of human rights by national human rights institutions. Therefore, this research endeavors to analyze how Social media have been used in the promotion of human rights within the context of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

As Alemayehu cited in (Daniel, 2019) from the young to adult, from scholar to ordinary public are engaged in the Social media and social networking activities and the engagement in the social networking sites has changed many aspects of citizens' communication and relationship. Aware of such a trend, it is no wonder if government organizations are making the most of the Social media to serve them as a medium to connect with and address the public or in other words to make use of it as a tool for public relations purpose or any other communication purposes. So is the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) which is constituted with the duties and responsibilities of educating the public about human rights by employing any media which it deems necessary for such a purpose including print media (newspapers), broadcast media (television and radio).

To make use of the latest communications technology, the Commission has also been using the Social media particularly the Facebook for the past three years now as a tool to promote human rights. However, what has been lacking in the process was consistent administration of the media on the part of higher officials of the Commission. No particular person was officially in charge of

running the day-to-day activities of the media in terms of overseeing the production of the content and updating its status on a regular basis. So much so, what had been abundantly clear was the non-responsiveness on the part of the Commission to the audience's comment and feedback which is apparently considered an indispensable tool for effective communication and thereby for the fruition of the human rights promotion; and hence the neglect to make the most of the media. Moreover, the absence of Social media policy, strategy, and guidelines to administer the Commission's Social media had made it all the more worse. Quizzical, comments, lodging compliant on human rights violations, and other grievances related to human rights had been forwarded through inbox and comments. Nevertheless, there had never been a working mechanism in place to handle these issues effectively. These have created a problem on the type and quality of content produced. As a result of the non-responsiveness to the audience's comment which made the Commission's Social media a one-way platform which should have been a two-way. This could not but tell that serious attention needs to be paid to the use of Social media by the Commission.

Therefore, this study is specifically concerned to show how the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in the promotion of human rights can effectively use Social media by probing into the use of Social Media.

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of the study is to investigate how and to what extent the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has been using Social media in promoting human rights.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

- To identify the content production process.
- To examine how often the Commission updates the Social Media
- To find out to what extent the Commission is using Social Media
- To explore how the two-way communication is implemented between the Commission and the audience/public.

1.4. Research Questions

Based on the above set objectives; the study likes to answer the following research questions:

- How is the content produced?
- Who does produce the contents?
- Who is responsible to update and monitor the Social Media?
- How is the audience's feedback/comment handled?
- For what purpose does the Commission use Social Media?

1.5. Significance of the Study

Social media particularly Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube are increasingly becoming the new tools of communication not only for personal and social concerns but also for government activities. The mass communication process is trending itself towards the use of Social media to address the public. Therefore, government offices are creating their own Social media page to communicate with stakeholders and the public at large. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission too has a Facebook page, which it uses as a medium to promoting human rights. This growing tendency towards the use of Social media as a new communication platform has also been inspiring researchers to study how these Social media effectively used.

The findings of this study are therefore meant to directly benefit the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission in terms of improving its performance in using the Social media for the effective promotion of human rights. It is also equally beneficial for other government offices effectively promote/communicate their objective to the public. No less so, these research could also be instrumental in the future in serving as a reference and academic literature for researchers interested in the use of Social media by government institutions.

1.6. Scope of the Study

Social media can be studied from various perspectives since its share and impact as a medium of communication is increasing all the time. However, this study focuses on the use of Social media in the promotion of human rights in the case of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC).

The EHRC has been selected for the reason that, it is the only national human rights institution established to promote and protect human rights in the country. Therefore, all the necessary data have been collected from the Commission's head office higher officials and the Information Communication Directorate of the Commission, which are supposed to have a controlling hand over or to manage the Commission's Social media page.

However, the benefits of the study other than for the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission, which is one of the democratic institutions in the country, could also be applicable to other democratic institutions in the effective communication of their set objectives to the public.

1.7. Limitation of the Study

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission has eight branch offices in the country. However, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, which resulted in movement restriction and physical distancing, the study is limited to the head office of the Commission. In addition, the study has a limitation to include audience-generated contents due to the Covid-19, which makes things difficult to find and interview the audience of the Commission's Facebook page.

1.8. Organization of the Study

The study is organized in five chapters, the first chapter of which is about introduction; background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research questions, significance, limitation and organization of the study. Chapter two reviews literature of relevant and earlier works related to the study while chapter three is devoted to the method and methodology applied. Chapter Four consists of data presentation, analysis, and interpretation where as chapter five presents conclusions and recommendations of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

2. Review of related literature

2.1. National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs)

The formation of the United Nations (UN) in 1945 due to the horrendous and grotesque abuse of human rights during the Second World War was the first catalyst for the setting up of National Human Rights Institutions (Okene, 2010).

The Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) first discussed the Question of National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) in 1946, two years before the UN General Assembly proclaimed the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations. In 1960, the matter was raised again, in a resolution that recognized the important role of national human rights institutions could play in the promotion and protection of human rights. In 1978, the Commission on Human Rights decided to organize a seminar in order to draft guidelines for the structure and functioning of national human rights institutions. These guidelines suggested that one of the functions of national human rights institutions should be to assist in educating public opinion and promoting awareness and respect for human rights.

The UN Commission on Human Rights and the General assembly subsequently endorsed the guidelines. The Assembly invited states to take appropriate steps for the establishment of national human rights institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights. Accordingly, the first International Workshop on National Human Rights Institutions for the Promotion and Protection of Human Rights was held in Paris from 7 to 9 October 1991. Its conclusions were endorsed by the Commission on Human Rights in resolution 1992/54 as the principles relating to the status of national human rights institutions (the “Paris Principles”), and subsequently by the UN General Assembly in its resolution 48/134 of December 1993 (UNNHRI, 1995).

The Paris Principles, principles related to the status of National Human Rights Institutions, adopted by the UN General Assembly resolution 48/134 December 1993 under the competence and responsibilities of NHRIs states that a national human rights institution shall be vested with competence to promote and protect human rights. Again, under methods of operation it states that

with the framework of its operation; the NHRI shall address public opinion directly or through any press organ, particularly in order to publicize its opinions and recommendations. Therefore, National Human Rights Institutions have the mandate to use press organs or media to promote and protect human rights.

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are domestic institutions created by the government of the state in which they act; charged with promoting and protecting human rights (Welch, 2015. p. 5).

National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) are; therefore, an independent government institutions mandated to promote and protect Human rights. They are supposed to conduct investigation on human rights violations and provide recommendation for the government to take all the necessary corrective measures. On the other hand, they are also supposed to engage in educating the public and creating awareness on human rights using different methods including the media. Generally, it is clear that National Human Rights Institutions have both the protection and promotion wings of Human rights.

2.2. The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC)

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) is a national human rights institution established based on the Article 55 sub-articles (1) and (14) of constitution of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia by the proclamation No. 210/2000 (Proclamation No. 210/2000).

The Commission established as an autonomous organ of the Federal Government having its own legal personality. The Commission is accountable to the House of People Representative of Ethiopia in order to ensure its independent from all forms of influence by the executive body of the government. The objective of the Commission is to educate the public be aware of human rights; see to it that human rights are protected, respected and fully enforced as well as to have the necessary measures taken where they are found to have been violated (Proclamation-No. 210/2000).

The Commission also has the power and responsibility to educate the public, using the mass media and other means, with a view to enhancing its tradition of respect for, and demand for enforcement of rights upon acquiring sufficient awareness regarding human rights (Proclamation No. 210/2000 Art.6/3).

To such an end, the Commission is mandated to conduct awareness creation on human rights by using various methods, means, and mechanisms. It uses events, face-to-face training, TOT, print & broadcast media, and Social media like Facebook in order to promote human rights.

2.3. Human Rights

Human Rights are those fundamental freedoms that are inherent in the human beings and that every single man and woman is entitled to enjoy by virtue of being human without distinctions based on race, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property or other status (Human Rights-Handbook, 2016).

According to the Human Rights Handbook (2016), Human rights are rights inherent to all human beings. Government or state has the responsibility to respect, to protect, and to fulfill human rights, which form the basis for legal entitlements and remedies in case of non-fulfillment (UN, 2016).

Human rights violation can be committed by people who work for the State as employees of governmental and municipal institutions, police officers, prosecutors, judges etc. Therefore, such human rights violations are violation committed by a government, on behalf of a government, with the acquiescence of the state. However, there is a distinction between human rights violations and human rights abuse. Human rights abuse is the act of breaching human rights by individuals or non-state actors (Human Rights Guide/www.cilvektiesibugids.lv).

The basic principles of Human Rights are universal, inalienable, indivisible, and interdependent. The basic human rights are applicable to every human being without discrimination, they are inalienable, but can be limited or restricted only by the law of fair trial. Human rights are not separated one from the other for the reason that they are highly dependent one another. The respect of one may result in the respect of another and the violation of one; to the violation of another. For example if a person denied the right access to food and water, the right to life of a person will be in danger.

2.4. Types of Human Rights

Human rights can be classified in to civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights, as well as the collective rights of peoples, which include the rights of women and children, the rights of person with disability...etc. However, they can be grouped in to four major groups. These include the following.

2.4.1. Civil and Political Rights

Civil and political rights are recognized rights in accordance with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The ideal of free human beings enjoying civil and political freedom and freedom from fear and want can only be achieved if conditions are created whereby everyone may enjoy his civil and political rights, as well as his economic, Social, and cultural rights (ICCPR, 1966).

Marks, Stephen P. (2014) on his work *Human Rights: a Brief Introduction*. Explained what civil and political right consists as follow:

The civil and political rights include rights to life; freedom from torture; freedom from slavery; freedom from arbitrary arrest or detention and the right to humane treatment under detention, freedom of movement and residence; prohibition of expulsion of aliens, freedom of thought, conscience, and religious belief, freedom of expression and the right to privacy. Rights concern the administration of justice like no imprisonment for debt; fair trial, the right to personhood under the law; and the right to equality before the law. Freedom of assembly, freedom of association, the right to marry and found a family, rights of children, the right to practice a religion, and the prohibition of war propaganda and hate speech constituting incitement). The final sub-set of these rights is related to political participation namely, the right to hold public office; to vote in free elections; to be elected to office; and to equal access to public service (Marks, 2014. p. 9).

2.4.2. The Rights to Clean Environment

The right to a clean environment is a fundamental right. It is both dependent upon and a precondition to a number of other human rights, including civil, political, economic, social, and cultural rights. For example, the preservation, conservation, and restoration of the environment are necessary for the enjoyment of the rights to health, to food, and to a decent, dignified life. The

right to a clean environment is not a purely individual right. Rather, it has a collective facet, belonging equally to such groups as future generations and indigenous peoples whose cultures depend on the environment for their existence and perpetuation (Cullet, 1995).

Moreover, environmental rights help to protect the environment from abuse and misuse. Any kind of damage to the environment like pollution of air & water, deforestation and over use of the soil causes land degradation, which resulted in human rights abuses. These clearly indicates that how human rights are indivisible and interdependent one another. Moreover, it affirms that Environmental rights are human rights, which affected the existence and interaction of people with their surrounding environment.

2.4.3. Women and Children Rights

Children's rights are parts of human rights with particular attention to the rights of special protection and care afforded to minors. As stated on Convention on the Rights of the child, the child, for the full and harmonious development of his or her personality, should grow up in a family environment, in an atmosphere of happiness, love, and understanding. The child should be fully prepared to live an individual life in society, and brought up in the spirit of the ideals proclaimed in the Charter of the United Nations, and in particular in the spirit of peace, dignity, tolerance, freedom, equality and solidarity. Children's rights include their right to association with both parents, human identity as well as the basic needs for physical protection, food, universal state-paid education, health care, and criminal laws appropriate for the age and development of the child, equal protection of the child's (CRC, 1989).

Women have the right to enjoy all human rights without any discrimination. The States Parties to the International Covenants on Human Rights have the obligation to ensure the equal rights of men and women to enjoy all economic, social, cultural, civil, and political rights. However, that despite these various instruments extensive discrimination against women continues to exist. The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women deals with the ban on any form of discrimination of women in its entirety (CEDAW, 1979).

2.4.4. Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights

Human Rights Handbook (2016), of the United Nation indicates that Economic, Social, and Cultural Right includes: Right to work, Right to just and favorable conditions of work, Right to form and join trade unions, Right to social security, Protection of the family and Right to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing.

People have the right to choose what they can work and to work in a conducive working environment that does not affect their safety/health/life. The right to access to health service, quality standard education, which can improve their living condition, is the Social rights. Cultural rights privilege the public or certain groups of the society to exercise, promote, and enjoy their culture, which might be religious or traditional practices that do not harm the surrounding environment.

All these human rights need to be sensitized, advocated, and promoted to the public to create awareness by using various media including Social Media. If the public is aware of these rights, the question for their respect, protection, and fulfillment will be raised and the state to stop violations of human rights if any.

2.5. Social Media

Social media is the term often used to refer to new forms of media that involve interactive participation (Manning, 2014). In the progressive development of media from broadcasting to interactive, Social media have appeared as new media in which people could interact and actively participate. Broadcast media are highly centralized where information/ message distributed to many people from the center in which feedback from the audience to the media was indirect and delayed.

Boyd and Ellison (2008) define social networks as “web-based services that allow individuals to construct a public or semi-public profile within a bounded system, articulate a list of other users with whom they share connection, and view and traverse their list of connections made by others within the system”.

Manning, (2014) also states that with the rise of digital and mobile technologies, interaction on a large scale became easier for individuals than ever before; and as such, a new media age was born where interactivity placed at the center of new media functions. One individual could now speak to many, and instant feedback was a possibility. Manning; (2014) also added that the low cost and accessibility of new technology also allowed more options for media consumption than ever before – and so instead of only a few news outlets, individuals now have the ability to seek information from several sources and to dialogue with others via message forums about the information posted. At the core of this ongoing revolution is the Social Media.

Social media is a group of internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of the web 2.0 and that allow the creation and exchange of user generated content (Kaplan & Haenlein, 2010).

Social media can be defined as an environment in which a group of people came together to share data, relationships and content, using internet communication channels. Social media applications appear as forums, micro blogs, social networks, Wikis, and web applications. The most common Social media tools are Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Snapchat, WhatsApp, Google+, Wikipedia, LinkedIn, and Reddit (Aksoy, 2018).

This indicates that Social media is a broad and complex term that includes all forms of internet-based digital plat forms. It includes all forms of social networking sites (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Linked-in, Youtube...). These two terms, Social media and social networking sites have differences, but they are used as common terms by the general public to represent the new media platform. The new media platform allows to create pages, post information, photo, video and user-generated content in interactive and participatory manner.

As an information system, Social media is built up on a set of (available) internet, communication and computing technologies as well as a set of ideological beliefs about how information should be created, accessed and distributed (Wolf et.al, 2018).

With the development of the internet, the polarization between the media and audience started to change. One information or message could be sent to a group or many and the feedback came back immediately. Nevertheless, most everyday communication through media remained dominated by

broadcasting. The initial development of social networking sites was, in effect, a scaling-down of public broadcasting to become individual posting to groups. In addition, the people who formed those groups would interact among themselves, including commenting up on the comments of others (Miller et.al, 2016).

Miller et.al (2016) also states that the Social media is up grading from the most private to the most public and from the smallest group to the largest groups. This will lead to the increasing of social interaction and society's participation in on line discussion. As a result, it creates a fertile environment for the communication process that takes place among individuals, groups, public, or organizations. These interactive and participatory natures of Social media played an important role for its growing position in the communication process.

2.6. Social media and Human Rights

Lisa and Mathur (2019) on their work Human Rights and Social media explain that Social Media, either in mobile communications or in digital networks are being successfully used for human rights awareness in first and second world countries. It can be used for promotion of human rights even in third world countries, which face issues of poor formal education, communication gap, governments' passivity etc. Social media can be used to educate people as to their right, how to complain in case of human right abuse and violation, authority to be approached, and remedies available and so on. Similarly, to organize people and events, communications can be shared effectively and quickly through Social Media. This can also serve for close monitoring of human right compliance from authorities. Social media is a good platform to promote human rights and legal awareness by social networking (Lisa & Mathur, 2019).

The Asia Pacific Forum media handbook for National Human Rights Institutions (2014) states that:

The rapid growth of Social media in recent years has transformed the nature of human rights advocacy and communication around the world. Social media is now an essential tool for nearly all human rights organizations, allowing them to connect with people, share information, exchange opinions, mobilize supporters, and advocate for change. The strategic use of Social media tools, such as Face book and Twitter, has

been a common element in recent efforts to bring about genuine legal, social, and political change in different parts of the globe (APF, 2014, p. 59).

Like other government and non-government organizations, National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs) become increasingly active online through Facebook, Twitter, Flickr, YouTube, podcasts, blogging, and other Social media tools to engage directly with different groups of people, especially younger people. Since the mobile technology brings the Social media in the hands of the users, it is wise to appear on the media where it is easily accessible (APF, 2014)

The handbook also explains the presence of NHRIs on Social media can have multiple purposes in promoting human rights. They will have the probability to address hate speech, misinformation, and fake news that may end up causing human rights violations. The other one is they can directly promote human rights and create awareness to the Social media users on line society.

Using Social media to promote the work of the NHRI and engage people in a two-way dialogue need not be overwhelming or difficult. With clear objectives developed as part of a broader communications strategy, Social media can be an invaluable tool for reaching new audiences and developing active partnerships (APF, 2014).

As the APF (2014) explains, Social media has significant importance for national human rights institutions. It helps to create greater awareness on the works of NHRIs, to reach mass and diversified audience without geographical barriers, to get supporters and partners involved in human rights related activities and promote human rights among their networks. It has also immediacy and simplicity to upload contents prepared to promote human rights and other activities.

2.7. Varieties of Social media Platforms

Social media is a general and broader term that used to describe all forms of on line digital media activity. It includes all forms of digital platform that used to send, receive, or share information and message by using internet. Social media is a complex term and that there are different types of Social media(Trottier & Fuchs, 2015). It includes Wikipedia, email, social networking sites like Facebook, Youtube, twitter, Instagram...etc. Trottier and Fuchs (2015) explain Social networking

sites as web-based platforms that integrate different media, information and communication technologies and that allow at least generation of profiles that display information that describes the users, the communication between the users.

2.8. Social media in EHRC

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) as an organization created a Facebook account on February 20, 2017 with the user name “**Ethiopian Human Rights Commission**” and its logo as a profile picture. Since then, the Commission has been using Facebook as a public relation & communication tool and as a medium to promote human rights. The Commission’s official Facebook page has 29,879 likes and 31,488 followers by the time this data taken, May 30/2020.

CHAPTER THREE

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

Research design is a strategic framework for action that serves as a bridge between research questions and execution or implementation of the research strategy (Durrheim, 2004, p. 29). According to Maxwell (2008) research design is a logical progression of stages or tasks from problem formulation to the generation of conclusion or theory, that are necessary in planning or carrying out a study. Research design is important because it helps to get relevant evidence, which support the finding of the research. In designing research, it is good to focus on the logical relation between the research question and the evidence needed to answer it.

There is ongoing argument in designing qualitative research that some argues qualitative research rejects the idea of research design, which is an entire blue print for piece of research. This is because qualitative research in characteristically exploratory is fluid and flexible, data driven and context-sensitive (Jennifer, 2002). However, qualitative research needs to have a research design because it will help to indicate and guide the research strategy used throughout the research. Nevertheless, it is important to know that research design and strategy evolves and can be adjusted or changed as the research progresses based on the practice, process, and context of the research itself.

This research is designed in exploratory qualitative research. According to University of Southern California Libraries (2016), Exploratory Research design is a useful approach for gaining background information on a particular topic. Exploratory research is flexible and can address research questions of all types (what, why, how). It also provides an opportunity to define new terms and clarify existing concepts. In the policy arena or applied to practice, exploratory studies help establish research priorities and where resources should be allocated. Most importantly exploratory research generally utilizes small sample sizes and, thus, findings are typically not generalizable to the population at large. Besides, it is flexible in applying data gathering methods, which is best fit for the research problem. Therefore, this research is designed in exploratory research design to investigate the use of Social media in promoting human rights in the case of the

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. For the reason that this research used small sample size of concerned bodies from the Commission's head office, the data gathering methods changed flexibly due to the Covid-19 impact of physical distancing, and its ability to address the various types of research questions.

3.2. Research Approach

Qualitative research is a scientific research consisting of an investigation that seeks answer to a question. Qualitative research greatly contributes in the culturally specific and contextually rich data, which produces qualitative research method (FHI, 2005). It used to explore information rich sources to produce answers to the research questions. Qualitative research is concerned with developing explanations of social phenomena. That is to say, it aims to help to understand the social world in which we live and why things are the way, they are (Hancock et.al, 2007). It discovers the human attitude developed towards the subject studied. Qualitative research tries to understand a specific organizational reality and occurring phenomena from the perspective of those involved. And as a result, qualitative research approach; which tries to investigate how the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission used Social media to promote human rights; is applied in this study,.

Haradhan (2018) holds that the purpose of qualitative research is to describe and interpret issues or phenomena systematically from the point of view of the individual or population being studied, and to generate new concepts and theories.

Qualitative research provides information about the human side of an issue through rich and explanatory data gathering techniques. According to Creswell (2013), qualitative research requires data analysis of data gathered using information gathering methods such as interviews, document analysis and participation observation. These qualitative data gathering methods help to get detail perspective of individuals involved or have direct or indirect relations with the issue under study.

According to FHI (2005), qualitative research method has advantage in exploratory research; that is the use of open-ended questions and probing gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words, rather than forcing them to choose from fixed responses, as quantitative methods do. Open-ended questions have the ability to evoke responses that are:

- meaningful and culturally salient to the participant
- unanticipated by the researcher
- rich and explanatory in nature

Another advantage of qualitative methods is that they allow the researcher the flexibility to probe initial participant responses – that is, to ask why or how.

3.3. Target Population

The target population of the research is The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. Because the focus of the research is to study the use of Social media in promoting human rights in the Commission. Therefore, the target population in which samples had been taken from is the head office of Commission. This is because the Commission’s Social media page that has been used for the promotion of human rights was created and had been administered from the head office. That is why Commissioners and communication experts at the head office have been purposely selected to provide relevant information for the study.

3.4. Sampling Techniques

Purposive or non-probability sampling method involves purposive or deliberate selection of particular units of the universe for constituting a sample, which represents the universe (Kothari, 2004). Purposive sampling technique has been applied to get informants for gathering the data. According to Kielmann et.al (2012), purposive sampling, choose sample with the intention (purpose) of representing certain characteristics. The researcher can choose cases randomly from that purposely chosen ‘universe’. This approach reduces the role of judgment with in a larger sample and provides a credible cross-section from the sample.

Therefore, two officials/Commissioners, the chief Commissioner and deputy chief Commissioner are selected purposely or deliberately from the eleven Commissioners of the Commission for the reason that they have a direct impact on the use of Social media by the Commission. From the 23 Communication experts at the head office and regional branch offices, only six have been selected purposely for the reason that they were one way or another directly engaged in operating the Commission’s Social Media.

3.5. Data Collection Method

In this research in-depth interview, group discussion methods for the primary data and Document analysis methods for secondary data collection; are selected to gather the data needed to answer the research questions. These methods are appropriate to generate useful data in qualitative research. Moreover, the methods fit for the research area in the case of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and the target sample population has been purposely selected as a source. However, due to the global pandemic (COVID-19) the researcher is forced to change the data gathering methods in to other type, so that he can avoid physical contact yet is enable to generate data for qualitative research at the same time. Therefore, open-ended question questionnaire for primary data and collection of document material for secondary data methods are used to gather the data.

The open-ended questions were sent to the respondents through email in open-ended question questionnaires format to generate qualitative data.

3.5.1. Open-ended Question Questionnaire

The open-ended questions usually require that responses, which reflect the opinions of the respondents, written in blank spaces which are to be analyzed qualitatively (Hancock et.al, 2007). It provides the chance to get the insight and attitudes of the participants towards the subject under study.

As Yin (2012) explains, the “field” in qualitative research need not always be the subject of a researcher’s observations or personal interactions. Many qualitative studies can base solely on a set of open-ended interviews. What makes the studies qualitative is that they are interested in the interviewees’ words and ideas, not in arraying the responses numerically.

Therefore, open-ended question questionnaire is used to get the information, ideas, attitude and responses of the informants participating in this research conducted to study the use of Social mediain promoting human rights in the context of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. Open-ended questions set no limits on the range or length of responses, instead gives participants the opportunity to explain their position, feelings, or experiences.

In this research, open-ended questionnaires had been distributed to selected respondents through email (for reasons of avoiding physical contact, and since some of the respondents were not actively on duty due to the COVID-19 pandemic, which forced them to work from home). The questions have been designed in a way that helps to generate the ideas, facts, experience, suggestions, and feelings of the respondents. The open-ended questionnaires distributed to eight respondents through email and 100% returned back.

3.5.2. Document Analysis

A wide range of written materials can produce qualitative information. These can be particularly useful in trying to understand the philosophy of an organization. It includes policy documents, mission statements, annual reports, minutes of meetings, codes of conduct, web sites, series of letters or emails, case notes, promotion materials, etc. (Hancock et.al, 2007). Therefore, any of the above stated documents or others related to the use of Social media at the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission have been used as a secondary data source and analyzed. These include the Commission's constituting proclamation 210/2000, the Commission's communication strategy, and the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission official Facebook page, which was created on February 20, 2017 with the user name "Ethiopian Human Rights Commission", and its logo as a profile picture.

3.6. Data Analysis

Qualitative data analysis is the classification and interpretation of linguistic (or visual) material to make statements about implicit and explicit dimensions and structures of meaning making in the material and what is represented in it (Flick, 2013). Qualitative data analysis is the range of processes and procedures whereby we move from the qualitative data that have been collected, into some form of explanation, understanding, or interpretation of the people and situations we are investigating. The qualitative data gathered from the informants need to be interpreted and analyzed in order to get the answers for the research questions. As a result, implications for policy or practice may be derived from the data, or an interpretation theory could be developed.

However, there are no 'quick fix' techniques in qualitative analysis. There is no one right way to analyze qualitative data, and there are several approaches available to analyzing qualitative data

(Lacey and Luff, 2007). Varieties of data analysis techniques could be applied to analyze qualitative data. Cropley (2019) also explains that, it is not possible to describe set procedures that can be applied in a fixed sequence in all qualitative analyses. Since qualitative research is an interpretative and subjective, the researcher can use it as instrument and have the flexibility to choose the technique that best fit for the data analysis. In this research, content analysis technique is used to analyze the data.

Content analysis is a widely used qualitative research technique (Satu Elo, 2014). It helps to infer from the data to their natural setting, to provide knowledge, new insights, facts, and a recommendations for future action. The Text data might be in verbal, print, or electronic form and might be obtained from narrative responses, open-ended survey questions, interviews, focus groups, observations, or print media such as articles, books, or manuals (Kondracki &Wellman, 2002). Data obtained in all forms can be analyzed in content analysis technique. As Cole (1988) cited in Elos and Kynga (2008). Content analysis is a method of analyzing written, verbal, or visual communication messages. The data gathered from the Ethiopian human rights Commission on the use of Social media in promoting human rights are analyzed with content analysis technique. The contents from the respondents were coded and interpreted.

The goal of qualitative data analysis is to uncover emerging themes, patterns, concepts, insights, and understandings (Patton, 2002). Therefore, the data collected from the purposively selected informants from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission and documents analysis have been coded, presented, and interpreted in line with their contents.

3.7. Ethical Consideration

The necessary research ethical guidelines are put in to practice. The purpose of the data to be gathered has been explained to the participants in order to build trustworthiness. What the participant says had been kept in confidentiality and was not revealed or anonymity of the participants had also kept throughout the study. The informed consent of the participants was obtained and the voluntary nature of the study had been explained to the participants. In addition, the researcher, employee of the commission tries to avoid the conflict of interest by relaying only on the primary and secondary data sources.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1. Data Presentation, Analysis, and Interpretation

This study conducted to investigate how the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission (EHRC) uses Social media to promote human rights. The study has specific objectives that set out of the general objective. i.e. to identify the content production process, to examine how often the Commission updates the Social Media, to find out to what extent the Commission is using Social media and to explore how the two-way communication is undertaken between the Commission and the audience/public. These specific objectives lead to build the research questions, which are going to be answered in this section.

The research designed in exploratory research design for the major reasons, which are flexibility to address research questions of all types or flexibility in applying data gathering methods and for it used to utilize small sample size. In this research, the researcher planned to use in-depth interview and focus group discussion as a major data gathering method. However, due to the corona virus (COVID-19) pandemic, which result in physical distancing, the researcher forced to use open-ended question sending the interview question in open-ended questionnaire format to the participants through email and collect the response. Qualitative research approach used for its advantage in exploratory research that, the use of open-ended questions and probing gives participants the opportunity to respond in their own words.

This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and interpretation of data collected through open-ended question questionnaires from the target population of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission Head Office. Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is an autonomous organ of the Federal Government, which has eight branches in regional cities of Mekelle, Bahir Dar, Hawassa, Jimma, Gambella, Jigjiga, Assossa and Semera. The Commission has communication department in the head office and all branch offices. However, for this research the respondents purposely selected only from the Head Office. This is because the Commission's Social media page operated and administered from the head office. The purposely-selected respondents include two Commissioners and Six Communication experts, six male and two female.

The data have been collected from both primary and secondary sources. The primary sources who responded to the open-ended questions include Commissioners, managers of communication department, and communication experts where as the secondary sources include the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission's establishment proclamation No.210/2000, the Commission's Communication strategy and the contents of the Commission's official face book page.

4.1.1. Data Presentation

As indicated earlier the primary data were gathered from the Commission Commissioners, Communication department leaders and Communication expert through open-ended questions questionnaires formulated in a way they answer the research questions. Therefore, to the effect of in order getting wider background information and better understanding of the theme, the research has presented the primary data in accordance with the open-ended questions as follows:-

1. Why has the Commission been choosing to use Social media in the promotion of human rights?

The formulations of these open-ended questions were geared towards getting the rationale of the respondents behind using Social media in the promotion of human rights and/ or the benefits of Social media in using Social media as a tool of promoting human rights. In responding to this particular question; the reflections of the respondents; in a nutshell; were:

- **Accessibility:** compared to mainstream media; though it may incur cost; the medium and technology are easily accessible; and readily available for users to access it with no limitation or barrier of time and place. It is ; therefore; the best way to promoting human rights.
- **Fast and Immediacy:** Communication through Social media is swift and instantaneous compared to mainstream media. It enables one to disseminate human rights information within a short period of time.
- **User friendly:** it is easy to use, user friendly and does not require huge logistic.
- **Cost effectiveness/ affordability:** the cost/fee to use Social media is cheaper than mainstream media. Both the Commission and the users/public can use it with relatively lower cost.

- Feedback: the feedback or comment obtained from Social media is immediate and freely commented without any intermediaries. This will benefit the Commission in getting input to make changes in the future.
- Two-way Communication: it is best for two-way communication. The Commission and the public both have the chance to send and receive a message alternatively.
- Sharing: the content posted on the Social media has the potential to be shared and re-shared endlessly by large number of people around the world.
- Alternative media: it is an alternative media to promoting human rights with no need of conventional media cooperation. It is also internally manageable.
- Freedom of information and expression: the right to freedom of information and expression is better ensured through the Social Media.

2. What is the role of the officials/Commissioners of the Commission in promoting human rights through Social Media?

- Newsmaker: the Commissioners are newsmakers. Leaders in the field guide the implementation of human rights principles and communicate with all others in the promotion and protection of human rights.
- Influence: influence the public to pay attention to human rights issues. The public like to hear from the horse's mouth.
- Overseeing: the Commissioners oversee every post on the Social media and check its correctness.
- Supportive: help the communication experts by providing training; give direction on what to focus. Provide comments on produced contents.
- The right information: they give the right information to the public. The Commissioners themselves are the chief promoter of human rights.

3. Who is responsible for producing contents posted on the Social Media?

- It is not clear or no guideline: It is not clear as to who should be specifically responsible for the content including the form or structure of the content. Sometimes it is the communication director, sometimes the officials or Commissioners/higher body. There is no clear guideline in black and white.

- Everyone: All experts in the communication department, volunteers from other departments, including Commissioners are responsible to produce contents for Social Media. . Their roles might vary from reporter to editor.
- Top and Middle level leadership: All top to middle level leadership are responsible in the production of the contents posted on the Social Media. However, the final touch is that of the leadership. The reason behind is to keep the content consistent with and be up to the human rights principles.
- Information Communication department: the Commission's information communication department, experts, and all other departments are responsible for producing the content posted on the Social Media.

4. What are the contents posted on the Commission's Social Media?

- Performance of the Commission: many of the contents posted on the Social media are about the obvious performance of the Commission.
- Press release and press conference: press release on current situation of human rights, news of events happened in the Commission, chief Commissioner's visit to police stations, human rights related contents and relevant shares from other organization.
- Human rights principles: basic human rights principles and the rights of all segments of the society.
- Findings of police station & prison monitoring, and human rights violation investigation reports.
- Recommendations: recommendations to governments institutions could be (naming and shaming statements), early warnings,
- Promotion materials: Human rights awareness creation and promotion materials, briefings, messages, interviews, human rights violations, disability, and women's rights.

5. Is there any responsible body to update and monitor the Commission's Social Media? How often is updated?

- Not clear: not clear as to who is specifically responsible. Because it does not appear to be believed that communications were deadly for the success of an institution. It seems to be perceived as a mere propaganda tool to face-save the higher bodies not to promote the performance of an institution.
- Yes, there is; these days it is the acting director of the communication department who is responsible for updating the Social Media. There is also a plan to assign a person who can update the page in different languages for the future.
- Security: Social media should have a responsible person to manage it for security reasons. If two or more people are assigned to manage, it might be exposed to hacking.
- There is a gap: Social media has to be monitored and updated on timely basis. However, it seems there is a gap in this regard.
- The Directorate: the Commission's information communication directorate is directly responsible to update the Social Media.
- I do not know: I do not know how often it is updated. There is no specific time to update.

6. How does the Commission handle the feedback/comments of the public that come through the Social Media? Is there any mechanism to that effect?

- No concern for feedback: usually there is hardly a concern for feedback.
- Relevant comments are collected and forwarded to the chief Commissioner.
- No procedure: there is no clear procedure put in place as to how to utilize Social media feedbacks.
- I do not know.

- Immediate response is given to comments. Because they are used as an input.
- It is used as an initial for planning, for understanding the public opinion, and human rights violation complaints.

7. To what extent does the Commission use Social Media? Is it only used for promoting human rights or for other purposes too?

- Until recently, it was only for the day-to-day performance of the Commission.
- It makes use of it on regular basis whenever there is news to disseminate to feed mainstream media.
- To inform the public about the Commission’s recommendation on human rights violation.
- As a media/means to appeal to human rights violations.
- To transmit information and promote the work of the Commission.
- To promote the rights of person in prison.

8. Is there any policy and strategy to administer the Social Media?

- I am not sure about its existence, and if there is one, it would be in the shelves with the inscription “RIP” that is to say “Rest In Peace.”
- No, but the Commission is planning to have one for the future.
- The Commission has no Social media specific policy, but makes use of international norms and other information communication policies of the country.
- There is no Social media policy and strategy. I think Social media is a new phenomenon.
- I do not know if there is any Social media policy or strategy.

9. Did the Commission find using Social media effective in promoting human rights? How?

- It is incredibly, a great communication tool immediately and directly reaches the audience, and enables to get their unadulterated comments/feedback.
- Yes indeed, it is a good platform to reach the public, easier to get more subscribers, and effective in accessibility.
- It is effective because it is not bounded by time in accessing the work of the Commission by the public.
- It is not effective, but accessible for limited members of the society.
- I do not know how it is measured.

10. How does the two-way communication between the Commission and the public go on through Social Media? Is there any study or measurement conducted?

- The communication is a kind of communication without collecting a feedback and not responding accordingly.
- No!
- I am not sure.
- There is large number of followers, most of them comment so the two-way communication is good. Nevertheless, I do not know if there is any study conducted.

11. Is there any plan or suggestion to upgrade the Social media for further use in the future? What are they?

- Oh, yes! We are not making the most of a Social media as a deadly tool of effective communications. We need to re-think about its benefits and organize our communications staff in such a way it effectively makes use of the media. We need to organize the staff in such a way that it has hierarchy such as an editor in chief, specialized editors; writers and reporters as well as proofreaders led by an editorial policy.
- I suggest having good experts to manage it and to increase the number of subscribers.
- Yes. There is a big plan to change the existing weak use of Social media and to utilize more than ever.
- As part of the reform and restructuring agenda at EHRC, we have plans to revamp media and communications capacity including expanding to digital and Social media platforms. Such a reform will also include the plan to introduce an appropriate ICT infrastructure, which is critical to modernize many functions/systems as well as digital/multi-media initiatives.
- We also need a proper media and communications strategy, policies and guides on how we can leverage the potential of Social media platforms to advance human rights messages, human rights education, and human rights advocacy.
- Implementing Policy and strategy on using Social Media.
- I do not know if there is a plan to improve the use of Social media in the future. But it is possible to upgrade the use of Social media by using updating techniques and technology, providing training for communication experts and by planning.
- Even though, not accessible to all parts of the society it will be useful if it is used properly and aggressively.
- Improving the internet capacity and using additional Social media platforms like Telegram, Instagram, twitter to improve accessibility to the public.

The secondary data of the research obtained from the Commission's establishment proclamation No.210/2000 states that:

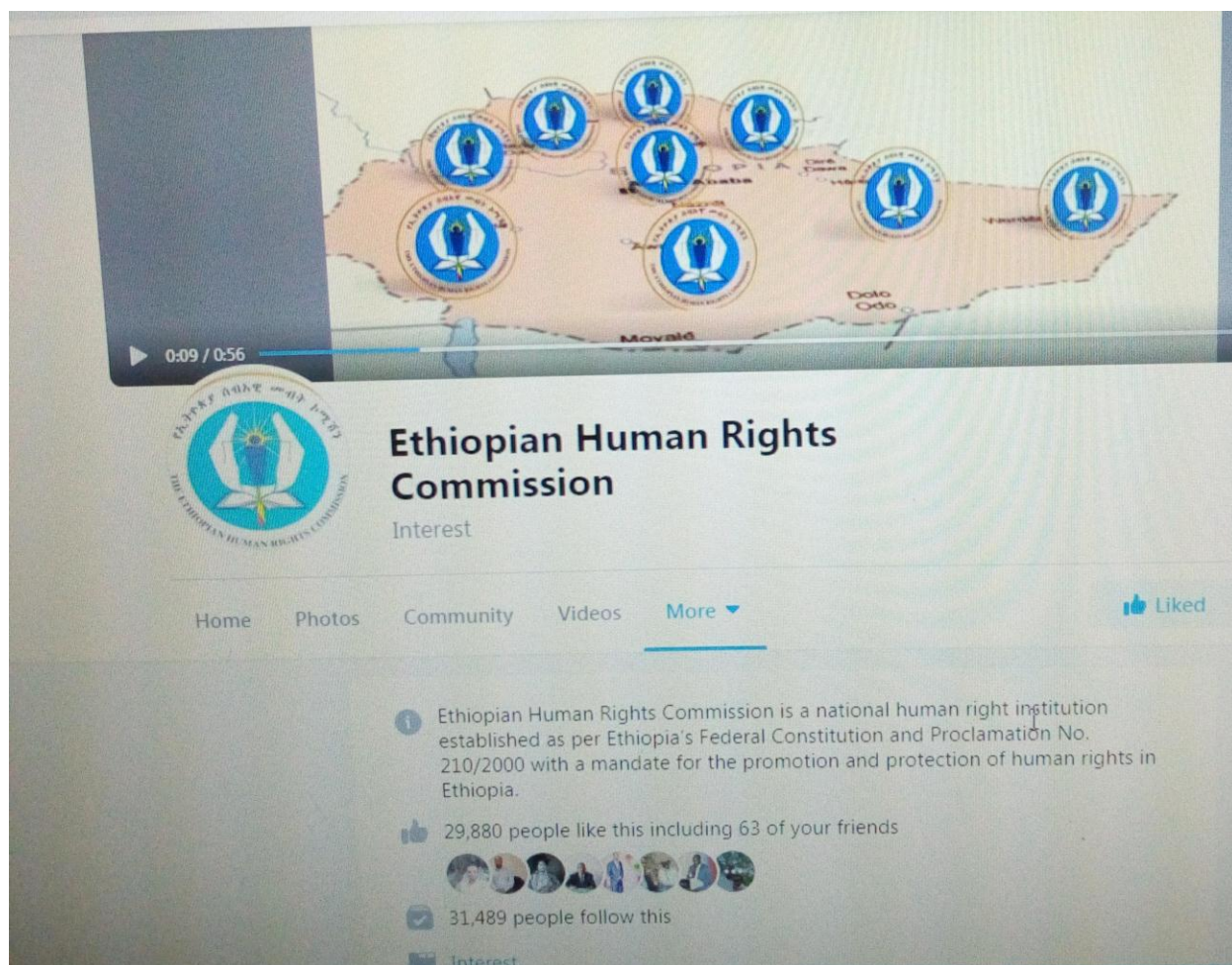
- the objective of the Commission shall be to educate the public be aware of human rights; see to it that human rights are protected, respected and fully enforced as well as to have the necessary measures taken to where they are found to have been violated. (Article 5)
- The Commission shall have the power and duty to educate the public, using the mass media and other means, with a view of enhancing its tradition of respect for, and demand for enforcement of rights upon acquiring sufficient awareness regarding human rights. (Article 6 (3))
- A complaint may be lodged with the Commission orally, in writing or in any other manner. (Article 23)

These indicate that there are fertile legal grounds to make use of Social media in the promotion of human rights. The Commission's establishment proclamation provides for the right to use other modes of communications to educate and create awareness on human rights. It also provides for an open door to use Social media as a means to promoting human rights and lodging human right complaints.

The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission communication strategy published in 2018 also acknowledges Social media as:

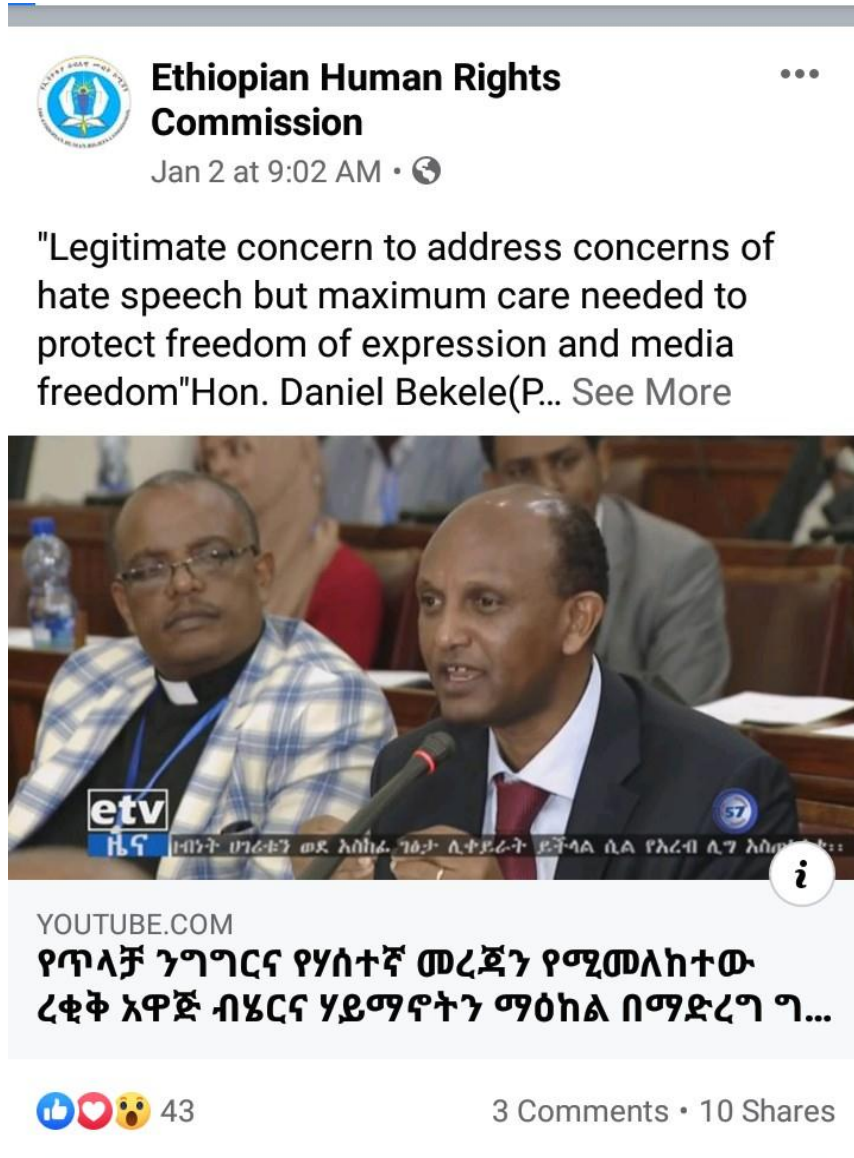
- An alternative media to appeal/lodge human rights violation, to discuss human rights issues with the public and to strengthen participation.
- A media used to create awareness on the human rights of vulnerable groups.
- A tool to disseminate information and promote free legal aid centers to the public.
- One to promote the rights of women and children.
- A connecting medium to various Social media platforms to provide information and promote human rights.
- Gate way to reach a huge number of people as such a medium was increasingly becoming a favorite for the latter in addition to Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Wordpress, LinkedIn, YouTube, and other as communication tools.

The Commission’s official Facebook page “Ethiopian Human Rights Commission” **was** created on April 20, 2017 and had 29,879 likes and 31,488 followers until May30, 2020; the date the data taken.



The page consists of varieties of items posted, which include photos, videos, and texts. The contents posted include the Commissions concern on legislation of laws, recommendation made by the Commission, position statements condemning human rights violations, events, interviews, and press releases.

The Commission expresses its concern on the legislation of a law that has a potential to limit or violate human rights.



The image shows a Facebook post from the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission. At the top left is the commission's logo, a blue circle with a white figure. To its right is the name "Ethiopian Human Rights Commission" in bold black text, followed by three dots. Below the name is the date and time "Jan 2 at 9:02 AM" and a globe icon. The main text of the post reads: "Legitimate concern to address concerns of hate speech but maximum care needed to protect freedom of expression and media freedom" Hon. Daniel Bekele(P.. See More". Below the text is a video thumbnail showing two men in a meeting. The man in the foreground is speaking into a microphone. A logo for "etv ኪና" is visible in the bottom left of the video. Below the video is a white box containing the text "YOUTUBE.COM" and Amharic text: "የጥላቻ ንግግርና የሃሰተኛ መረጃን የሚመለከተው ረቂቅ አዋጅ ብሄርና ሃይማኖትን ማዕከል በማድረግ ግ...". At the bottom of the post are icons for like, love, and wow, with the number "43" next to them. To the right of these icons is the text "3 Comments • 10 Shares".

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission

Jan 2 at 9:02 AM • 🌐

"Legitimate concern to address concerns of hate speech but maximum care needed to protect freedom of expression and media freedom" Hon. Daniel Bekele(P.. See More

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👍❤️😲 43

3 Comments • 10 Shares



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Jan 15 at 2:42 PM • 🌐

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ጥር 6፣ 2012 - የጥላቻ ንግግርና ሀሰተኛ መረጃን ለመከላከል በሚል አዲስ የተረቀቀው አዋጅን አስመል...

👍❤️😮 39

4 Comments • 6 Shares



Like



Comment



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The Commission uses the Social media to release the recommendation made on the current condition of the country to promote human rights to get the necessary attention.



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Apr 17 at 2:57 PM • 🌐

Statement and Recommendations on the Implementation of the State of Emergency Proclamation and Regulation

14 April 2020

Introduction



The Ethiopian Human Rights Commission recognizes the need for the measures adopted by the Federal and State governments to prevent and control the further spread of COVID-19 and reduce its impact, as well as the Proclamation by the Federal Government declaring a national state of emergency on the 8th of April 2020. ... See More

👍 Filebar Abduro and 80 others 4 Comments • 42 Shares



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Mar 31 at 6:18 PM • 🌐

ስለ ኮቪድ-19 (ኮሮና ቫይረስ) መከላከል እና ሰብዓዊ መብቶች አጠገባቢ ከኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን የተሰጠ ምክረ ሀሳብ

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አዲስ አበባ መጋቢት 22 ቀን 2012 ዓ.ም.... See More



👍 190

9 Comments • 312 Shares



The Commission also uses the Social media page to denounce any act of human rights violation by the security agents or any measure taken by the government to enforce the law.

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ...
May 13 at 3:33 PM • 🌐

የፖሊስ የዘፈቀደ እስር በአስቸኳይ ሊቆም እና የታሰሩትም ሊለቀቁ ይገባል

Police Should Immediately Stop Arbitrary Arrests and Release those Detained
***** 

(አዲስ አበባ፣ ግንቦት 5 ቀን 2012 ዓ.ም.) በዛሬው እለት በአዲስ አበባ ከተማ የአፍና አፍንጫ መሸፈኛ ሳያደርጉ የተገኙ ሰዎች በፖሊስ እየታሰሩ... [See More](#)

  645 209 Comments • 921 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ...
Apr 28 at 9:49 PM • 🌐

EHRC Media Advisory

መደበኛ ባልሆነ ቤት የሚኖሩ ቤተሰቦች ከመኖሪያቸው በሃይል መፈናቀል በጊዜያዊነት ሊታቀብ ይገባል

Moratorium on Forced Eviction of Informal Settlements during the State of Emergency

(አዲስ አበባ፣ ሚያዝያ 20 ቀን 2012 ዓ.ም.) በአዲስ አበባ እና ሌሎች ከተሞች የተከሰተውን መደበኛ ባልሆነ ቤት የሚኖሩ ቤተሰቦችን መፈናቀል ጉዳይ በተመለከተ የኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን ዋና ኮሚሽነር ዶ/ር ዳንኤል በቀለ የሚከተለውን ብለዋል::... [See More](#)

 185 12 Comments • 33 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share

The Commission uses Social mediato promote events related to human rights.

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ...
Dec 4, 2019 at 8:34 PM • 🌐



01:07 የወቅ ገበያላቶው ተገኝሏል። i

YOUTUBE.COM
አለም አቀፍ የሰብዓዊ መብት ቀን ህዳር 30 ለ71ኛ ጊዜ ይከበራል

👍 31

3 Comments • 3 Shares

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** added 12 new photos.
Dec 11, 2019 at 5:43 PM • 🌐

በዓለም ዓቀፍ ደረጃ ለ71ኛ ጊዜ የሚከበረውን የሰብዓዊ መብቶች ቀን በማስመልከት በኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን እና በሰብዓዊ መብቶች ላይ ከሚሰሩ የሲቪል ማህረሰብ ድርጅቶች የተሰጠ መግለጫ

+++++... See More



Interviews given to mainstream media were also posted on the Social Media.

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ...
Mar 5 at 6:48 PM • 🌐

Chief Commissioner's interview with Walta TV
Part 3



[About this website](#)

YOUTUBE.COM
“ህዝብን ማሞኘት አይቻልም” - ዳንኤል በቀለ (ዶ/ር)
ከኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብት ኮሚሽን ኮሚሽነር ጋር የተ...

 Seble Asfaw and 32 others  8 Shares

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ...
May 22 at 10:32 AM • 🌐

Chief tells Sheger FM that the Commission has deployed COVID-19 and Human Rights monitoring teams at prisons and police stations.



[About this website](#)

MIXCLOUD.COM
ግንቦት 12፣ 2012 የኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብት ኮሚሽን በማረሚያ ቤት ያሉ ተራሚዎች ለኮሮና ቫይረስ እንዲደ...

 28  4 Comments •  7 Shares

It also used Social media to disseminate press releases, so that other media can access and report it.



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Apr 17 at 10:17 PM • 🌐

የኢሰመኮ ጋዜጣዊ መግለጫ
++++
የመዘዋወር ነጻነትን በተመጣጣኝ መንገድ ብቻ ስለመገደብ
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ማስጠንቀቂያ መስጠት... See More



👍 171

16 Comments • 70 Shares



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Nov 22, 2019 at 6:30 PM • 🌐

የኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን
የሲዳማ ህዝብ ውሳኔን አስመልክቶ የተዘጋጀ መግለጫ
++++
ሐዋሳ (ህዳር 12 ቀን 2012 ዓ.ም.) በሲዳማ ህዝብ ውሳኔ
ላይ የሰብዓዊ መብት ሁኔታን አስመልክ... See More

👍❤️😄 176

34 Comments • 91 Shares



Like



Comment



Share



Ethiopian Human Rights Commission



Nov 22, 2019 at 3:41 PM • 🌐

Ethiopian Human Rights Commission
Press Release on Sidama Referendum

Hawassa (22 November 2019):
Preliminary Statement on the Human Rights
Situation of the Sidama Referendum

The contents posted on the Commission Social media consist of more textual narratives and lack consistency in updating at regular time. See the date on the picture below when the post uploaded or posted.

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ⋮
 Mar 31 at 6:18 PM • 🌐

ስለ ኮቪድ-19 (ኮሮና ቫይረስ) መከላከል እና ሰብዓዊ መብቶች አጠባበቅ ከኢትዮጵያ ሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን የተሰጠ ምክረ ሀሳብ
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 +
 አዲስ አበባ መጋቢት 22 ቀን 2012 ዓ.ም.... See More

 190  9 Comments  312 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ⋮
 Mar 16 at 10:29 AM • 🌐

የኢትዮጵያ የሰብዓዊ መብቶች ኮሚሽን የጅም ዞን ማረመያ ቤት ጉብኝት

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ⋮
 Dec 9, 2019 at 8:06 AM • 🌐




SBS.COM.AU 

“የምንሠራው የሰብዓዊ መብቶችን ለመከላከል እንጂ፤ የሰብዓዊ መብቶች ጥሰቶች ሲፈጸሙ እየጠበቅን ለ...

  47  9 Comments  10 Shares

 Like  Comment  Share

 **Ethiopian Human Rights Commission** ⋮
 Dec 4, 2019 at 8:34 PM • 🌐

These are some selected contents posts from the Commission's official Social media page to indicate what contents are posted, how often the page had been updated and the nature or structure of the contents posted.

As the posts imply, in reaching out to the public; the Commission's Social media page had been used for various purposes such as for promoting human rights, condemning human rights violation, disseminating press releases and interviews, promoting events and other regular activities. However, the contents posted were for the most part nowhere near fitting the nature of the Social Media. Most of them had been textual with characters beyond the maximum limit of 250. The posts had not been capable of generating dialogue or appreciative of the comments of the audience, they were rather dumping what was produced. The page was not regularly up dated; rather contents were posted as found or produced. These could not but indicate the lack of professional or expertise touch of the Commission's Social Media, which couldn't but adversely affect the effective utilization of the media and thereby the reputation of the Commission.

4.1.2. Data Analysis and Interpretation

Social media is apparently becoming an indispensable communication tool being used by almost all National Human Rights Institutions (NHRIs), allowing them to connect with the public, share information, create awareness and advocate for human rights. It also enables them to do their fundamental responsibility, which is to promote and protect human rights.

The respondents to the open-ended questions set to investigate the use of Social media in promoting human rights within the context of the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission replied that the Commission chooses to use Social media for the obvious reasons that Social media are user friendly. People can use it with the knowledge they have to operate their mobile phone. It does not need to have complicated knowledge of internet or ICT to access Social Media. It is a cost effective tool to access or use, where people earn lower income can also use it. Moreover, the feedback/comments that come through Social media are free and immediate. This makes the two-way communication to take place between the Commission and the public. The contents posted on the Social media can be liked, shared & re-shared, and viewed by large number of people throughout the world. This helps to get a large number of audiences without geographical

limitation or physical boundary. And for these reasons there is hardly an alternative to choosing and making the most of the Social media in the promotion of human rights by the Commission.

That the Commission's officials/Commissioners participate as newsmakers, influencers, overseers, supporters, and direct information providers to the public is commendable in a way. All the same, it seems that they are over controlling the Social media rather than facilitating the use of it in the promotion of human rights. Their role has to be providing the necessary resources, set policy, strategy, and guidance to keep the Social media on the right track in order to achieve the Commission's goal.

There is no defined responsible body assigned to produce contents posted on the Commission's Social Media. As the respondents replied, there is no clear guideline as to who should be specifically responsible in this case. The hitherto practice has been that everybody, including Commissioners, middle level leaders, and experts from all departments in the Commission seem to half hazard assume such a responsibility. This shows that, there has been a lack of assigning professionally tied experts in producing and determining contents of the Social Media. Given the respondents replies; such a responsibility seems to be taken as a voluntary activity in which concerned body participate from all departments with no unifying editorial policy. Commissioners, other managers, and expertise may contribute content; but the content produced for post on the Commission Social media page need to be structured, and edited by respective professionals. Who are supposed to be knowledgeable of the nature of the media, as the structure, format, content, and varieties of the post are what matters most to win the attention of the audience.

As the respondents mentioned; contents including photo, pictures, videos, clips, and texts had been posted on the Commission's Social media page, which range from the day-to-day activities to human rights principles, promotion materials, press releases, and press conference to findings and recommendations made on human rights violations. Yet, the structure, format, and even the content and varieties of the post could not but in terms of professional editing ask for reconsiderations.

To that effect, the Asia Pacific Forum (2014) Media Handbook for National Human Rights Institutions recommends that:

Contents posted on Social media should be short; precise consist of 100 – 250 characters (less than three lines). This will help to generate more “Likes”, comments, and shares compared with posts longer than 250 characters. It should be visual, that include photo or video and info graphic features. Using a conversational tone to talk to the audience to like and share, suggest ways for people to get involved to promote human rights among their networks. Posts should be tied with the current events, do not post two or three things at the same time. The more you post, the more often you will appear in the news feed of the subscriber or follower. However, it is important to balance between being active and being annoying. Be regular poster. Be responsive; remember that Social media is about generating dialogue with the audience (APF, 2014, p. 63).

Social Media, specifically Facebook is recommended to be updated three to six posts per week. But from the respondent’s replies, that there was no clarity as to who is specifically responsible for monitoring and updating the Commission’s Social media page. The respondents hold that there was a gap in this regard. However, some have also indicated that the acting communication director had been in charge of monitoring and updating the Social Media. The page was reportedly handled whenever there was a news item and updated whenever there was new information. However, there was no schedule or fixed regular time set to update the media according to the above recommendations.

Related to the feedback/comments, the respondents explain that there was no concern and clear procedure for feedbacks. No response was made to the comments of the audience on the Social Media. In other words, comments had not been re-commented or liked. Experts in the field hold that Social media is participatory and is about generating dialogue with the audience; put differently; it is not a monologue. This means responding to comments and feedbacks in a timely way is crucial to build a good rapport with the audience. (APF, 2014) recommend that “if people post negative comments, be courteous and professional in your reply”.

The Commission's Social media is not only means to promote human rights but has also been serving as a communication tool to address the obvious day-to-day performance of the Commission, to disseminate news and information, and as a means to lodge complaints of human rights violation. It does pay off to use the Social media for variety purposes. It will be much better if it used in such a way it enables and the exchange of opinions, mobilizes customers. It is a powerful disseminator of information and facilitator of mass conversation, which can bring about many-to-many communications. It can also be used to organize and coordinate the action of many, and engage directly with different groups of people. However, National Human Rights Institutions may encounter a number common obstacles when it comes to integrating Social media in to their communication and outreach activities, such as resourcing, understanding best practice and measuring the effectiveness and impacts of their online effects (APF, 2014).

The respondents are of the conviction that there was no specific policy and strategy to administer the Commission's Social Media. However, considering international norms and other information communication policies of the country; it is reportedly said that there is a plan to have one for the future.

It is important to have Social media policy; because it helps to avoid the above-mentioned problems related to who is responsible to produce content and update, how often it is should be updated, and ho comments are supposed to be handles ...etc. The Asia Pacific Forum (2014) states that a Social media policy is a code of conduct that provides guidelines for National Human Rights Institutions NHRI staff who post content online and the types of information supposed to be shared. The policy sets expectations for appropriate behavior online and to ensure that content posted by staff will not expose the NHRI to controversy, criticism, or embarrassment.

There are a number of issues to consider when developing a Social media policy for National Human Rights Institutions like the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission such as:-

- The identification of who will have overall responsibility for the Commission's Social media presence.
- The identification of who will contribute the information/contents that the Commission will post.

- Whether or not new posts and responses to comments need to be approved by a Commissioner or any other higher body and the way this process works in practice.
- That issues and topics for posts and online discussions focus on the work and mandate of the Commission.
- Ensuring that the Commission staff respects the privacy of people in their online community. Seeking permission from people featured in a photo or video before posting.
- When posting information about sensitive issues, ensuring that no confidential or identifying details revealed, such as people's names, location, or affiliations and;
- The way complaints or negative feedbacks are to be handled. .

If the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is going to have a Social media strategy, it will then need to set out what to achieve through the online communication, what Social media to use to achieve its goals, how to use the tools effectively, and how to manage possible risks.

Different Social media channels have their own strength and weakness. Choosing the Social media platform that will be most effective will depend on the goal the Commission wants to achieve, the target audiences, time, existing resources and way the online activities complement and reinforce the Commission's broader communications strategy.

An effective Social media strategy will attract and engage new supporters, keeping them informed, interested, and keen to support the work of promoting human rights to share and re-share its messages with others in their online networks (APF, 2014). Social media can be an invaluable tool for reaching new audiences and developing active partnership; it is to promote the work of the Commission with clear objectives developed as part the communication strategy.

The respondents explain that Social media effectiveness as a great communication tool that immediately and directly reaches to the public and enables to get the unadulterated feedbacks/comments of the audience. However, the practical effectiveness of using Social media to promote human rights in the Commission is not justified by any study or measurements conducted to assess the effectiveness. The effectiveness of Social media can be measured by a number of followers, likes, shares and views the page itself and the posts. The Commission has not as yet implemented this measurement to test the effectiveness of performance of its Social media in promoting human rights.

Two-way communication has an interactive nature of information exchange between the sender and the receiver. The respondents explain that Social media is the perfect tool to facilitate the two-way exchange of information which finds expressions in the form of a comment or inbox in this case. Social media has change the role of the audience from passive to active participants. However, due to its none-responsiveness to audience's comments or feedbacks, the Commission has not yet made the most of it. In other words; even though the media is potentially capable of conducting a two-way communication, the Commission had only a linear or one-way communication with the audience nor was it in any position to conduct a study or assess how the two-way communication could be enforced. Given that, it can safely be said that the Commission had no plan what so ever to improve the participation of the audience and to sponsor the page in order to get more followers.

To make the most of the benefits of a Social media in promoting human rights; upgrade the Social media the respondents forward some important suggestions like, organizing the staff in such a way it does things hierarchically such as assigning chief editor, editors and reporters etc. and updating the technology and training the communication experts to best utilize the Social Media. Improving the internet capacity of the Commission and use of additional Social media plat forms like Telegram, Instagram, Twitter...etc which increase accessibility to different segments of the society is also the other recommendation forwarded by the respondents.

The Commission's higher officials who participated as respondents indicate on their part that as part of the Commission on-going reform program, the Social media is to be given attention so as to make the most of it in the promotion of human rights by addressing all the problems revolving around the performance of the Social Media. The officials say that there is a plan to improve media and communication capacity of the Commission including expanding it to digital and Social media platforms; introducing appropriate ICT infrastructure, which is critical to the modernization of the use of digital multimedia; to implement proper media and communication policy, strategy and guidelines to best utilize the Social media in advancing the e human rights promotion.

In general, the study finds out that the Commission has a sound legal ground to use Social media not only as a tool for the promotion of human rights but also for other media related purposes. There is clear understanding and consensus on the multiple advantageous of Social media by the

Commissioners and communication experts of the Commission and are out to go for Social media for its accessibility, user friendly, immediacy and participatory, suitability for two-way communication and cost effectiveness.

However, it is so far underutilized and sufficient attention was not given to the platform. There is no responsible body assigned to produce and update content on regular bases. The contents produced had not been fit to the specific nature of the media in use. Even though, the Social media in use is capable of entertaining a two-way communication between the Commission and public, responses to comments on the part of the Commission are still lacking and as a result communication had remain to be only one way. No study or measurement had been conducted to evaluate the effectiveness of the tool used in the promotion of human rights. To top it off, there is no policy, strategy, and guideline to administer the Commission's Social Media. And this clearly calls for the implementations of such guidelines in order to effective utilize the Social media in the promotion of human rights.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.1. Conclusion and Recommendations

As stated earlier, the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission is mandated by the FDRE Constitution and its establishing proclamation to protect the human rights of the citizen as provided for in the FDRE constitution. And its functions to such an effect are monitory and investigate human rights abuses and violations and to have them properly addressed when ever such rights have been found violated. The Commission is further mandated to educate the public on human rights by employing all available media including the Social Media.

The Commission has therefore been using the Social media for a number of purposes including for the promotion of human rights for sometime in the past. However, in its usage of such a Social Media, the Commission, despite efforts, had shortcomings in the effective treatment of the media in the promotion of human rights. The following are therefore; the findings of factors behind such shortcomings and the recommendations.

5.1.1. Conclusion

As indicated earlier, the research has been conducted with the core objective of investigating into how and to what extent the Ethiopian Human Rights Commission uses Social media in the promotion of human rights. The specific objectives have also been set to assess the content production by finding the answers to the questions: who produces the content posted? How often has the Commission's Social media been updated?; and How have the two-way communication between the Commission and the public been effected?.

According to the findings of the research, the Commission has chosen the Social media for the promotion of human rights for its distinct features like accessibility, immediacy and participatory, capability to conduct a two-way communications, cost effectiveness. It is also because it considers Social media as an alternative media to reach a large number of audiences all over the world, without any geographical boundary.

Even though, there is better understanding of such a role of a mass media, enough attention has not been paid to the Social Media. It is not clearly stated who is responsible to produce contents, and in what format? Who is responsible to update the page and, at what time or on what regular bases? This has resulted in the preparation of contents without guidelines and clearly delimited

responsibility as to how the media should be administered and managed. To be specific, the contents were not produced in conformity with the typical feature of the platform. So much so, contrary to the nature of the media; long texts with large characters had been posed instead of visual and info graphics with limited character or lines.

What is more; responses to the audience comment/feedback were nowhere near practice, and these have been in no way in conformity with the nature of the Social media which; as a two way communication; need the generation of a dialogue between sender and receiver. In other words, the way contents organized and posted were incapable of initiating conversation by inviting the audience to comment, like and share the content.

Still to come, no study has been conducted to measure the effectiveness of the Social media used in the promotion of human rights; nor measures were taken to improve the number of like and followers of the page as contents were not organized on the basis of the like, comments and share in order to get the measure of their success.

In general; the Commission has not been using Social media for more than three years now, yet without any Social media policy, strategy, and guideline to administer and manage the media for greater utilization nor proper resources were allocated in terms of trained experts, material and financial and technological expansions. This is indicative of the fact that enough attention were paid to the Social media of the Commission so that for it to effectively promote human rights.

5.1.2. Recommendations

Based on the findings of this research; the following recommendations are forwarded for greater and better utilization of Social media in the promotion of human rights by the Commission and the following are the details of the recommendation:

- Paying due attention to best utilizing the Social media in the future such as furnishing sufficient resources in terms of trained experts, material, and finance need to be considered to upgrade the quality of content and to boost the number of followers and subscribers.
- Responsible body should be assigned to produce contents, update the page, reply promptly to audience comments, and follow the day-to-day activities related to the Commission's Social Media.
- The Commission would do a great deal of good to itself if it considers coming up with Social media policy, strategy, and guidelines with the view to administering and managing properly for effective use of the platform.
- The Commission has to conduct assessment that identify which Social media platform was and has been increasingly used by large number of the society in order to expand its out-reaches in the promotion of human rights and its appearance on other Social media like Twitter, Instagram, You tube, Linked-in ...etc.

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Appendix

Open-ended Question Questionnaires

1. Why has the Commission been choosing to use Social media in the promotion of human rights?
2. What is the role of the officials/Commissioners of the Commission in promoting human rights through Social Media?
3. Who is responsible for producing contents posted on the Social Media?
4. What are the contents posted on the Commission's Social Media?
5. Is there any responsible body to update and monitor the Commission's Social Media? How often is updated?
6. How does the Commission handle the feedback/comments of the public that come through the Social Media? Is there any mechanism to that effect?
7. To what extent does the Commission use Social Media? Is it only used for promoting human rights or for other purposes too?
8. Is there any policy and strategy to administer the Social Media?
9. Did the Commission find using Social media effective in promoting human rights? How?
10. How does the two-way communication between the Commission and the public go on through Social Media? Is there any study or measurement conducted?
11. Is there any plan or suggestion to upgrade the Social media for further use in the future? What are they?