

Original Research Article

**SOCIAL CHALLENGES FACING EX-PRISONERS DURING THEIR INTEGRATION
INTO SOCIETIES IN IRINGA MUNICIPALITY, TANZANIA**

Abstract

This study examined the social challenges encountered by ex-prisoners during their reintegration into society, with a specific focus on Iringa Municipality. The research employed a combination of questionnaires and key-informant interviews to gather both qualitative and quantitative data. Thematic analysis was employed to analyze qualitative data, while Statistical Product for Social Solutions (SPSS Version 20) was used to analyze quantitative data.

The study's findings underscored several significant social challenges faced by ex-prisoners as they sought to reintegrate into their communities. These challenges primarily revolved around discrimination by family members and society, difficulties in securing housing, and limited access to essential healthcare services. The research also highlighted the substantial economic hurdles faced by ex-prisoners in their reintegration efforts. These economic challenges encompassed difficulties in accessing employment opportunities, a lack of access to capital, and a dearth of business skills and training. Furthermore, the study uncovered the profound psychological challenges that significantly hindered ex-prisoners' successful reintegration into their communities. These challenges included the lack of access to counseling services during and after imprisonment, stigmatization by both family and society, a general lack of support from these social circles, and the prevalence of depression among ex-prisoners.

Based on these findings, the study proposes a series of recommendations to improve the reintegration of ex-prisoners into society. These recommendations include the provision of relevant training and skills development programs within prisons to enhance employability, the provision of psychological and counseling services, and the allocation of seed capital or necessary tools to facilitate the establishment of small businesses. Additionally, the study suggests reconsidering employment policies, especially for government positions, to ensure that individuals with a history of imprisonment are not automatically excluded. Finally, the study calls for educational initiatives aimed at reducing discrimination against ex-prisoners by raising awareness about their rehabilitation and potential contributions to society.

Keywords: Social challenges, Ex-prisoners, Integration, Societies, Iringa Municipality

1.0 Introduction

Globally, after the prisoners are released from prison, on their integration in society they are supposed to be involved in various social and economic activities for their life wellbeing, however because of being in jail, members of the society tend to mistrust them (Oruta, 2016; Chanakira & Chikadzi, 2017; Chikadzi, 2017 & Arabella, Brook, Matthew, 2019). Becoming a member of the society after prison is a process of social integration that involves more than just living in a given place; but conveys attachment to a social compact that comprised of a set of roles and conferring a basic level of living in such society (Western *et al.*, 2014).

Upon released from prison, ex-prisoners embark upon tumultuous transitions of re-entry into societies, and most of them worry about finding employment, shelter and their reconnecting and integration with their families, societies and support system (Davis, Bhr & Wars., 2012). The authors further added that although there are many programs and opportunities for ex-prisoners to improve their lives after prison and minimize the chances of their integration in their societies, several challenges often outweigh the support systems resulting in high reoffending. In light of the similar observations by Yin, Boateng and Kofie (2022); Holzer, Raphael and Stoll (2019) added that finding permanent employment that has been attributed among other things by stigmatism of criminal persuasion and the possible reduction of job skills and social ties to those who could provide employment opportunities while some of ex-prisoners are not functional when they get out of prison and many were lacking relevant experience to hold even a freelance job; and lack occupational skills, have little or no experience in seeking employment and confront employers who are uneasy about hiring individuals with criminal records (Ally, 2022). Citing Petersilia (2003) and Adams, Chen, and Chapman (2016), Yin *et al.* (2022) further added that post-release employment of ex-prisoners played a critical role in their reintegration process. However, imprisonment makes people less likely to be employed as, imprisonment comes with its stigmatizing consequences (Brown, (2011) and Schmitt and Warner (2011) cited by Yin *et al.*, 2022).

In Africa, ex-prisoners encounter economic sanctions as they lack welfare assistance as one of the important transitional resources after they are released from prison (O'Brien, 2019); that could ease their integration into their families and societies. The ex-prisoners do not only face challenges of enjoying their rights with their family members, they also face difficulty in accessing public assistance (Grommon, Rydberg & Bynum, 2012). In most cases, ex-prisoners are not trusted by their family and societies members (Davis, *et al.*, 2012; Cortes & Rogers, 2018; Hirschfield and Piquero, 2010 cited by Arbella *et al.*, 2022). As a result of this situation, most of the ex-prisoners are in great state to re-offend as most of them will develop antisocial behaviors and unacceptable behavior due to the negative perception by members of community (Chanakira & Chikadzi, 2017; Legal Action Centre, 2018).

Several studies (such as Chanakira & Chikadzi, 2017, Chikadzi, 2017; Ally, 2022; Arbella *et al.*, 2022; Yin *et al.*, 2022) reported on various challenges facing ex-prisoners on their integrating in their societies; in Tanzania there are limited studies on issues associated with prisoners and ex-prisoners. For examples, a study by Ally (2022) focused on psychosocial effect of ex-prisoners and the mitigating strategies as they integrate into the community while Missigaro (2014) assessed on successfulness of rehabilitation in prisons to convicted prisoners. The government of Tanzanian has the programs of providing education to offenders that include adult education, adult post-secondary education, career and technical education as well as special education before they are released to re-enter to community and make them productive to their societies after completing their prison sentences, yet most ex-prisoners do face maximum stigma from their families and society members (Oruta, 2016; Ally, 2022& Arabella *et al.*, 2019). Globally, evidence shows that most of the ex-prisoners are disadvantaged in almost all spheres of life; socially, economically, politically and psychologically a central factor that influence most them to re-offend (Legal Action Centre, 2018 & Taliaferro, *et al.*, 2020).

Despite that several studies have identified that prisoners do undertake various rehabilitation courses on different skills that would help them on their easy integrations upon their release, yet they do encounter a number of challenges (Arabella, Brook, Mattew & Tegan, 2019; Ally, 2022; Yin *et al.*, 2022). For example, ex-prisoners do face challenges of securing employment (Davis *et*

al., 2012; Flake, 2015 & House of Common, 2017 cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019; Arabella *et al.*, 2019 & Yin *et al.*, 2022); stigmatized and face life-long discriminations; a situation that have been limiting their re-integration in their societies (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010 cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019; Yin *et al.*, 2022). Others challenges included their right to vote, work and access to affordable housing (Flakes, 2015; Cortes & Rogers, 2018, House of Common, 2017 & cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019). Arabella *et al.* (2019) added that rejection of rejections of ex-prisoners among others challenges facing ex-prisoners, was effectively extending their punishment and reduce their ability to function as normal citizens. It is against that reality this study was carried out to determine social challenges facing ex-prisoners on their integration in their society using Iringa Municipality as case; given that among others factors, there are limited studies on challenges facing ex-prisoners in Tanzanian context.

2.0 Material and Methods

2.1 Description of the Study Area

The study was carried out in Iringa Municipality Council, in the Southern highlands zone of Tanzania. It lies between latitudes 7° 46' 0 south of the Equator and longitudes of 35° 42' 0 East of Greenwich. To the north Iringa Municipal Council is borders Mtera Dam and it is bordering Iringa District in the South. To west, Iringa municipal council borders Iringa District and to the east it borders Kilolo District. Iringa municipal council occupies a total area of 162squarekilometres. According to the 2012 national census, the town council's population was 151,343. Administratively, the town council is divided into one division, 18 wards and 192 streets. The study was done in five wards namely Kihesa, Isakalilo, Mlandege, Kwakilosa and Kitanzini in Iringa Municipality.

According to the Tanzania National Census, in 2022-2023 the population of, the Municipal of Iringa, Tanzania has a population of 111,036. From 2015 up to 2022, the ex-prisoners in Iringa Municipal were 297, among them 97 of the ex-prisoners who have been release from the prison and reoffend and taken back to the prison. But now they have finished their imprisonment and Integrate in the society. This made the Iringa Municipal Council to be among the municipals in the country with a lot of ex-prisoners who reoffend after their integration in the society. Also, the researcher chose the area because there are few studies under taken regarding on the challenges encountered by ex-prisoners on their integration in their society in Iringa Municipal.

A notable example is that the study by Ally (2022) only assessed the psychological effects of ex-prisoners and the mitigating strategies as they integrate into the society in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. Following this observation, there was a need for the researcher to make a thorough assessment of the social, economic and psychological challenges facing ex-prisoners on their integration in their society in Iringa Municipal.

2.2 Research Design

This study employed a cross-sectional research design to explore the social challenges facing ex-prisoners on their integration in their society in Iringa Municipality. A cross-sectional study is a type of research design used in social science studies in which a researcher collect data from a population at one specific point in time (Cherry, 2019), hence it is cheap and less time-consuming than other types of research (Kothari, 2014). Cross-sectional studies can be used for both analytical and descriptive purposes (Kothari, 2014). An analytical study tries to answer how or why a certain phenomenon might occur. A descriptive study only summarizes said outcome

using descriptive statistics. Therefore, a cross sectional research design is adopted in this study so as to describe characteristics (e.g., age, income, gender, etc.), views and perceptions of the population studied in Iringa Municipality.

2.3 Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling techniques

2.3.1 Target population

Krysiak and Finn (2010), defines the term population in research as the totality of persons, events or organizational units to which the research problem is dealing with. This study targeted all the ex-prisoners on integration in their society after imprisonment. On social, economic and psychological challenges they encountered in their society once they are released from the prison, Prison Officers, Legal officers, Parole officers, Community Service officers, Ward Executive Officers and Street Executive Officers

2.3.2 Sample Size

The sample size represents a subset of the accessible population, which is a common practice in research (Kothari, 2014). To ensure a vigorous and representative sample, 50 former prisoners were selected as participants. These participants were drawn from five specific wards: Kihesa, Isakalilo, Mlandege, Kwakilosa, and Kitanzini, with each ward contributing 10 former prisoners who completed questionnaires. The justification for selecting this sample size can be explained using Kothari's (2014) formula for determining sample size. According to this formula:

$$\text{Samples size, } n = \frac{N}{1 + N + E^2}$$
$$n = \frac{200}{1 + 200 \times 0.5^2} = 50$$

Whereby: N = Population n = Sample size E = Standard error (in this case, set at 5%)

By applying this formula, the study derived the expected sample size. This approach ensures that the sample is large enough to provide meaningful insights and draw valid conclusions about the broader population of ex-prisoners in these specific wards.

2.3.3 Sampling Techniques

The research employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques:

Purposive Sampling: This technique was used in several stages of the sampling process. Initially, Iringa Municipal Council was purposively selected as the study area because it serves as the headquarters for all prisons in the Iringa Region but also the need to access individuals who met specific predetermined criteria, including prison officers, legal officers, parole officers, and community service officers. Selecting Iringa Municipality as the study area was logical because it attracted many ex-prisoners who migrated to the town in search of employment opportunities. Within Iringa Municipality, five wards were purposively selected: Kihesa, Kwakilosa, Mlandege, Kitanzini, and Isakalilo. This choice was based on the relative concentration of ex-prisoners in these wards, as a majority of them were released from these areas. Therefore, these wards were considered suitable for capturing a representative sample of ex-prisoners. In the third stage, specific streets within these selected wards were also purposively chosen. Streets like Kihesa Sokoni, Mafifi, Dodoma Road, Semtema, Mwachang'a, Lubida, Tanki la Maji, Zizi la Ng'ombe, Mlolo, Mawelewele, and others were selected because they had

a higher incidence of reoffending issues. Again, this choice was justifiable as it focused on areas with a higher concentration of ex-prisoners facing reintegration challenges.

Snowball Sampling: The fourth strategy involved the use of snowball sampling techniques to select respondents, particularly when collecting information from ex-prisoners. Snowball sampling is appropriate for locating and accessing hard-to-reach populations, like ex-prisoners, as it relies on referrals from initial participants. This method allows researchers to expand their network of participants within the target population.

2.4 Data Collection Methods and Instruments

Both qualitative and quantitative data were collected. Quantitative data were collected by using structured questionnaire with both open and closed ended questions, whereas qualitative data were collected using structured interview. The questionnaires that consisted of both close and open-ended questions were used to collect data from 50 ex-prisoners. Structured interview method was used to obtain data from Prison officers, Legal officers, Parole officers, Community Service Officers, Ward Executive Officers (WEO) and Street Executive Officers (SEO). The data was recorded on a note book or a tape-recorder.

2.5 Data Analysis and Interpretation

Quantitative and qualitative methods were utilized for data analysis in the following manner. Qualitative data collected through interviews underwent a three-stage thematic analysis process. The initial stage involved data reduction, where certain data aspects were emphasized, while others were minimized or excluded. The second stage, known as data display, aimed to present organized and condensed information. The final stage involved drawing conclusions and verification, which included interpreting the data's meaning and its implications for the research questions. This approach was applied to both interview data and responses to open-ended questions in the questionnaires. The researcher coded the data to create categories, and the results were subsequently interpreted and presented in a descriptive and narrative format. In this study, the central theme focused on the social challenges faced by ex-prisoners during their reintegration into society.

In contrast, data from closed-ended questionnaires were coded and entered into Statistical Product for Social Solutions (SPSS v.20). These data were primarily analyzed using straightforward descriptive statistics, such as percentages and frequencies. The results were then visually presented through tables and charts.

2.6 Validity and Reliability of Research Instruments

2.6.1 Validation of instruments

To ensure validity of this study, the internal validity approach was established, through ensuring trust between a researchers and respondents, giving respondent's awareness of the research topic and by initiating interview and questionnaire through the specified themes of the research topic.

2.6.2 Reliability of data

In order to control the reliability of this research, pre-testing of interview guide and questionnaire were done in order to check if they were comprehensive enough to collect the required data. After the pre-testing, modifications and improvements of research instruments were made.

2.7 Ethical Considerations

In this study, the researcher adhered to all ethical issues by obtaining necessary permissions first from the University of Iringa and subsequently from government authorities in Iringa Municipality. Furthermore, the researcher explained to the respondents about the research aim, and that the study was for academic purposes only. Ethical consideration was also addressed by showing commitment to respondents and ensuring a high level of confidentiality and anonymity with no names collected and disclosed. Also, the norms and cultures of participants were respected and an individual's participation in the study was voluntary.

3.0 Results and Discussion

3.1 Demographic Characteristics of the Respondents

This part analyses the distribution of respondents according to their personal characteristics of respondent's age, sex, marital status, and education level. The demographic variables are a primary basis for characteristics of the respondents as they determine how ex-prisoners adopt/respond to socio-economic and psychological challenges.

Results (Table 1) revealed that 48% of the respondents were aged between 29-39 years, 23% were between 18-28 years, 18% were aged between 40-50 years and 12% were above 50 years. The results show that most (71%) of ex-prisoners were aged between 18-39 years. This findings relates with those by the study of Misigaro (2014) in Tanzania that found that 52.5% of the prisoners were aged between 20-39 while Muasya (2013) in his study in Kenya found that majority (45.3%) of ex-prisoners were aged between 38-47 years. Moreover, in their study Arabella *et al.* (2019), also established that most of ex-prisoners had an average of 36 years. Arguably, this suggests that this age group is the most active working group and, a group that engage into different activities to earn income for themselves and for their families and, some find themselves involving into illegal activities that contributed to their imprisonments. Similarly, Muasya (2013) added that most of ex-prisoners were young people to the middle aged, this is the most active age and the time young adults begin to shoulder various responsibilities in their lives, but who in the process may have been frustrated by lack of the same due to prevailing economic hardships found themselves engaged in illegal activities that led into the evictions and thereafter imprisonment.

Findings (Table 1) depict that most of the ex-prisoners (64%) were male and 36% were female. Similar to this finding, a study by Ally (2022) in Iringa also revealed that there were more male prisoners than women. Muasya (2013) also found most (70.3%) of the ex-prisoners were males. According to Arbella *et al.* (2019), in their study in US found that 54% of ex-prisoners were male, with the population of prisons in the whole of US being made up of 93% males, and only 7% females (Bentley, 2018 cited by Arbella *et al.*, 2019). According to Muasya (2013) argued that the higher number of male prisoners could be because traditionally, men commit more crimes than females. Arguably, this might be because of the gender roles male play, as in most societies men are regarded as a breadwinner, finding they engaging in illicit activities that led to their convictions.

Of the respondents, 48% were single, 24% were married while 18% were separated and only 10% were widow/widower. Contrary to this finding, a study by Missigaro (2014) in Dar es Salaam in Tanzania found that majority (45%) of prisoners married, 53% were single while only 2% being widow. In relation to the study of Missigaro, a study by Muasya (2013) in Kenya also found that most (52%) were married and only 16 (10.8%) were single or had never married, another group at 52 (35.1%) was either divorced or separated. This variations on marital status could be because, respondents claimed that they got imprisoned before getting married as they were young to get married, others claimed that they found their former wives were married to other men and divorced while others said their status of being imprisoned makes it difficult to get relationship.

UNDER PEER REVIEW

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the respondents

Demographic characteristics	Frequency(n=50)	Percent (%)
Age groups		
18-28	4	23.3
29-39	28	46.7
40-50	11	18.3
Above 50	7	11.7
Total	50	100
Sex		
Male	32	64
Female	18	36
Total	50	100
Marital status		
Married	12	24
Separated	9	18
Widow/widower	5	10
Single	24	48
Total	50	100
Education level		
Primary	23	46
Secondary	19	38
University Education	4	8
Adult Education	4	8
Total	50	100
Skills/profession		
Carpentry	2	4.2
Civil engineering	3	6.3
Agriculture	12	20.8
Business	20	41.7
Small-scale livestock keeping	13	27.1
Total	50	100

Source: Research, 2023.

In light of the significance of marital status of ex-prisoners on their integration into society, Nowak (2020) argued that many ex-prisoners who are single are the one with a lot of challenges compared to the married ones, as in most cases, they found their partners on a good situation of life compared to the ones who are single and widow or widower or even never married since they do not have partners to assist them. The Life Course Theory further stipulates that the social influences which include among others marriage, parenthood, friends, and treatment interventions, easy integration of individuals into their societies, as the social networks provide structure and opportunities for law abiding and behaviour change. Laub and Sampson (2017) further suggested that change is most likely when ex-prisoners have the desire to change, view change as possible, and have social support for change, creating bonds with family members and friends that could help individuals desist from crime. For example, citing Arsrapport (2011), Nowak (2020) found that many projects organized in Denmark aim at strengthening prisoners' bonds with their families so as to improve relations of convicts with children, both while in

prison and after being released; as by doing so, will ease their integration with their families and their societies.

Results (Table 1) revealed that just less than a half of the respondents (46%) had primary education, 38% had secondary education while 8% of respondents had university level of education and other 8% have adult education. This suggests that, most of the ex-prisoners (92%) had just a basic education level. Several studies (such as Oruta, 2016; Muasya, 2017; Duwe, 2018; Arbella *et al.*, 2019 & Nowak, 2020) found that, most of ex-prisoners being having low level of education. Duwe (2018) also added that inmates in USA's prisons are under educated and underemployed compared to adults in the US, prisoners are at least three times more likely to be without a high school or General Educational Development (GED) diploma and four times less likely to have a postsecondary degree (Duwe, 2018).

Since most of the ex-prisoners had a low level of formal education and/technical education, it could be one of the challenges once it comes to their employability and thereof, their integration into their societies. Beside, Oruta (2016) put it that education plays a significant role in shaping people's behavior, the more educated people are, the more they can engage in constructive activities and therefore they are less likely to commit crimes as compared to the less educated and those who are not educated at all.

Results (Table: 1) reveals that majority of the respondents (41%) were engaged in small business, (27%) were small-scale livestock keeping, (20%) were farmers (6.3%) were civil engineering and only (4.2%) were carpenters. Based the study finding, most of the ex-prisoners are working to earn every day bread-winning kind of activities, this makes them face economic challenge on their integration in their societies. In his study in USA, Martin (2011) put it that many ex-prisoners come from a low-income background and return to it upon release. The authors also added that most of ex-prisoners rely on financial support from family members and friends for months after their reentry and in some cases for years as a result of their limited access to employments. For example, in the District of Columbia, less than 60% of ex-prisoners were working full-time, a year after their release and about 10% were working part-time and, those who find employment often do so in industries that require very little or no skills that jobs in the construction industry as manual laborers, food service, maintenance, and manufacturing sectors: Many of these ex-prisoners are underemployed when compared with the types of employment opportunities they had before their incarceration. As it was revealed on the education level of most of ex-prisoners, their low level of formal education, skills/or profession, it is difficult for them to find highly paid employment, thus why many might be working on informal employment just to make a living. In light of the challenge of acquiring employment opportunities among ex-prisoners, Martin (2011) added that many of ex-prisoners do opt to engage into underground economic activities can range from babysitting to cutting hair to selling drugs. Participating in the underground economy, especially in illicit activities like selling drugs, places some ex-offenders at-risk of incarceration.

3.2 Social Challenges Ex-Prisoners' Face on their Integration in their Societies

3.2.1 Visitations of respondents during their imprisonment

Finding in Table 2 depicted that most of the respondents 62.5% were not visited by their families/relatives during their imprisonment while 37.5% said that they have been visited by their families and relatives.

During an interview with a key-informants it was reported that, ex- prisoners do faced the challenge of not being visited while in prison because their families, friends and members from the society they lived with, tend to neglect them as they were seemed as unwanted in their societies....” as situation that later make their integration in their societies being a challenge (*Prison Officer, July 2023*).

This suggests that, most of respondents who were not been visited by their family members, could have psychological effects such as trauma, anxiety just a few to mention; making them felt being isolated and unwanted by their families and relatives. This finding concurs with the by a study Oruta (2016), argued that a failure by the family members to visit offenders while in prisons, create a negative perceptions and psychological effects such as anxiety and stigma to both ex-prisoners and; could complicate their integration into their societies once released; and that compelled them to relapse into criminal activities soon after release from prisons.

Table 2: Visitations of respondents during their imprisonment

Ex-prisoners' being visited	Frequency (n=50)	Percent (%)
Yes	18	37.5
No	32	62.5
Total	50	100

Source: Research, 2023.

It should be emphasized that the French penitentiary system is characterized by an extensive visiting system, which facilitates contacts of prisoners with their families, ensuring that they maintain regular and frequent contact as one of the important aspects of maintaining family ties and family reintegration in French prisons is the functioning of “family life units”. Inmates can spend up to 72 hours together with their spouses and children (Kazemian, Catrin 2012 cited by Nowak, 2020). As postulated in the Life Course Theory, social influences such as marriage, parenthood, friends, and treatment interventions: social networks that enable change of human behavior such as, ex-prisoners and therefore, facilitates their integration into their society. Similar observations was also reported by Laub and Sampson (2017) that, change is most likely when ex-prisoners have the desire to change, view change as possible, and have social support for change, creating bonds with family members and friends that could help individuals desist from crime.

3.2.2 Discriminations faced by ex-prisoners

Result (Table 3) show that most of ex-prisoners, almost 94% claimed to faced discriminations from their families and societies compared to only 6% who claimed that they did not face discriminations. Most of the respondent who faced discriminations might be because many of family members and the societies did not trust someone who has a history of being imprisoned. Globally, numerous empirical evidences show that discrimination of ex-prisoners by their families and societies (see, Muasya, 2014; Oruta, 2016; Chikadzi, 2017; Arabella *et al.*, 2019 & Nowak, 2020), has been has one among several challenges that has been influencing their

integration into their societies. Moreover, Jobela (2018) emphasized that a maximum stigma from their societies once is released from the prison. Different forms of stigma and discriminations the ex-prisoners encounter from their members of the society affect ex-prisoners in different ways leading to issues such as reoffending, depression, and civil disenfranchisement. Citing Hirschfield & Piquero, (2010), Arabella *et al.* (2019) added that ex-prisoners are a rejected group in many societies; highly stigmatized and facing life-long discrimination; making community reintegration particularly challenging (Flake, (2015) & House of Commons, 2017 cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019). Arabella *et al.* (2019) further added that this rejection effectively extends the punishment of ex-prisoners and reduces their ability to function as normal citizens.

This is in line with the study conducted by Travis (2016) who revealed that re integration is better conceptualized as a maintenance process, which relies on reciprocal interactions between the ex-prisoner and the wider community. Based on the findings, most of ex-prisoners undergo discrimination. The study findings relate with that of Oruta (2016), who found that segregations and negative perceptions of the ex-prisoners by the societies were significantly affecting smooth integration of ex-prisoners and, were associated with their re-offending soon after being released from prisons. It worth refreshing that, most of prisoners and ex-prisoners are characterized with low level of education, low income, high unemployment among others, making them being isolated from their families and societies

Table 3: Discriminations of Ex-prisoners on their Integration in their Societies

Faced Discriminations	Frequency (n=50)	Percent (%)
Yes	45	93.8
No	5	06.2
Total	50	100
Types of discriminations faced by Ex-prisoners		
Not accept by their families/societies	10	22
Isolated by families	17	38
Not been trusted that they have changed	9	20
Given bad names	7	16
Job dismissal	2	4
Total	45	100

Source: Research, 2023.

3.3.3 Types of discriminations faced by ex-prisoners

Of the respondents of claimed to face discriminations (Table: 3) 38% of the respondents claimed being isolated by their family members and their societies, 22% were not accepted and, 20%, were not trusted. The results further show that, 16% of ex-prisoners claimed to be discriminated

by being called bad names and only 4% claimed to be terminated from employment from their former working places.

During a face-to face interview with a key-informant, one said

“...one of the ex-prisoners had been discriminated by his fellow neighbours and decided to go live in another ward...” (WEO, July 2023).

Another one said

“...total isolation among ex- prisoners is the biggest challenge and the term criminal will never end, ex-prisoners are labeled as criminals” (Prison Officer, July 2023).

The other one said, family members of one ex-prisoners were involved and it was agreed that and consented that the person should return to the community, but sometimes when an ex-prisoner arrives in the community, they stigmatize him especially the Parolees (Parole Officer, July 2023).

Basing on the findings, the researcher found that, some of the ex- prisoners were not accepted by family/society by being told to go and live far from their family houses, the society did not trust that they changed despite being rehabilitated in prison, being given bad names by the members of the community like “**bibi wa jela**”, “**Mjela**” also others were terminated from employment from their working places and never be employed by their offices on their integration to their societies.

These findings get support from a study by Chikadzi (2017) that reported that social challenges that ex-prisoners face on their integration into their societies included difficulties in mending family and community relationships such that after prison, their family members and people from their societies forbidden and hated them which resulted into failure of ex-prisoners to re-adjust life after imprisonment; a situation that not limit their integration but also might be contributing for ex-prisoners to commit other offence that would lead to their re-prison. In light of the same findings Arabella *et al.* (2019) also founded that ex-prisoners have been rejected group in many societies and facing life-long discrimination; limiting their re-integration into their societies (Hirschfield & Piquero, 2010 cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019).

3.3.4 Access to housing among ex-prisoners

The data provided in the Table 4 below shows that 32% of the respondents claimed that they were kicked from the tenement houses, 28% were homeless, and 20% were living family houses, 10% were evicted from government houses and 10% found their houses worn out.

Table 4: Reasons for lack of housing among ex-prisoners

Response	Frequency (n=50)	Percent (%)
Evicted from the government house	05	10.0
Kicked out from the tenement house	16	32.0
Living in the family home	10	20.0
Homeless	14	28.0
House worn out	05	10.0
Total	50	100

Source: Research, 2023.

On the interview with the key informant, one said

“Most of the ex-prisoners are being neglected by the landlords, as either because of being not trusted or failed to pay for rent, making them face a challenge on housing” (SEO Kihesa Ward, July 2023).

The other one said:

Many of ex-prisoners are being kicked on the tenement houses due not having money to pay on time and pay the debts since they left their properties in the tenement houses and face a challenge of housing (WEO Kitanzini Ward, July 2023).

On the key informant interview, one said

... “Some ex - prisoners had to stay at the family house with their family because they have not enough income to pay rent”... (SEO Kihesa, July 2023).

The study findings are similar to, several global studies that reported that, accommodation to be one among other challenges facing ex-prisoners. For example, a study by Cortes and Rogers (2018) revealed that the first month after prisons are release is a vulnerable period during which the risk of becoming homeless, whereas, lack of stable housing can increase the possibility of being rearrested. Citing Pogorzelski *et al.* (2005), Arabella *et al.*, 2019) added that, in many societies ex-prisoners are marginalized via short and often long-term restrictions on many issues such housing; with some landlords do not want to rent out homes or spaces to people that have a criminal background (Muasya, 2014).

Similarly, LaVigne *et al.* (2014) argued that the lack of identification, financial savings, credit, and income make the private housing market inaccessible to most of ex-prisoners. In light of the same findings, citing, Flake (2015) and House of Common (2017), cited by Arabella *et al.* (2019) put it that accessing affordable housing among most ex-prisoners has been a most challenge to most of ex-prisoners in many countries.

However, halfway house has been one of the choices among ex-prisoners. In halfway houses there are rules that must be adhered to and onsite criminal justice staff providing constant oversight. There is also onsite access to support and guidance, and a step between immediate return to the community and prison (Muasya, 2014, Harding, Wyse, Dobson & Morenoff, 2014; Williams, 2014 cited by Oruta, 2016 & Howak, 2020). Beside, a downside to halfway houses is

that the individual may only be able to stay at the house for certain duration of time (Harding *et al.*, 2014; Inderbitzin, 2009 cited by Oruta, 2016). Another housing option to ex-prisoners could be supportive housing of which the individual only pays 30% of the rent (Inderbitzin, 2009 cited by Arabella *et al.*, 2019). Again, people can be denied this type of housing because of their criminal record.

3.3.5 Access to health services among ex-prisoners

Results in Table 5 revealed show that 80% of the respondent claimed that they lack access to health services because of not having enough money to access the services while only 20% they face the challenger to the access on health services because they do not qualify to continuing using their health insurance.

Table 5: Access to Health Services among Ex-prisoners

Access to health service	Frequency (n=50)	Percent (%)
Lack of fund to pay for health services	40	80
Lack of qualification, for health insurance	10	20
Total	50	100

Source: Research, 2023.

During a key-informant interview with a key-informants, it was highlighted that, "... ex-prisoners face difficulties in medication since they do not have even fund to purchase their daily basis, some come in the society while sick and have no excuse on medication fee..."(Legal Officer, July 2023).

The other key-informant proposed that "*the government should assist ex- prisoners on medication at least in first six months of integration in the society since many do not have cash to pay on medication...*"(Prisoner Officer, July 2023).

In light of the challenge of accessing health services among ex-prisoners, (Kinner, Dooren, Boyle, Long and Lennox (2014) put it that although there is increasing recognition of the complex and chronic health needs of imprisoned and ex-prisoners populations, evidence-based responses to these needs remain indescribable Based on this one would argue that, if health of prisons is not well taken care, the situation of ex-prisoners would worse, given that most of the ex-prisoners are faced with several challenges that include but not limited to poor economic status, limited employment opportunities, discriminations and limited access to housing. Citing Butler *et al.*(2007), Kinner *et al.* (2014) further added that prisoners experience impaired general health on a range of measures; and the prevalence of mental illness is similarly elevated; particularly for post-traumatic stress disorder, psychotic disorders and substance use disorders (Butler *et al.* 2006; Fazel and Danesh 2002 & Heffernan *et al.* 2012 cited by Kinner *et al.*, 2014).

Given that most of prisoners are faced with health problems while in custody, it is obvious that almost all prisoners return to the community, with most of these ill-equipped to deal with their often-complex health and psychosocial needs, and many returning to pre-incarceration patterns of behaviour and associated health outcomes within a relatively short period (Baldry *et al.* 2003; Hobbs *et al.* 2006; Kinner 2006 and Visher & Courtney 2007 cited by Kinner *et al.*, 2014); contributing to high rates of re-offense (ABS, 2012 & SCRGSP, 2011cited by Kinner *et al.*, 2014), and a high incidence of preventable mortality, particularly in the first few weeks after release (Binswanger *et al.* 2007; Kinner *et al.* 2011cited by Kinner *et al.*, 2014).

In fact, many ex-prisoners are reluctant to access community services, feeling a sense of shame driven by the stigma of being an 'ex-con' and compounded by a reluctance to ask for help. For those who do seek support, funding limitations often restrict the capacity of service providers (Kinner *et al.*, 2014). For example, discrimination based on one's criminal record has been an additional barrier for most of ex-prisoners to engaging in healthcare (Smedley *et al.* 2003 & Schnittker & John 2007 cited by Frank, Wang, Nunez-Smith, Lee & Comfort, 2014); whereas as a stigmatized social status that can result in unfair treatment (Schnittker & John 2007 cited by Frank *et al.*, 2014); and access to health care services (Frank *et al.*, 2014). A study by Frank *et al.* (2014) found that in this cross-sectional study of 172 recently released male prisoners, 42% reported a lifetime history of criminal record discrimination by healthcare workers. Based on the study findings, it is obvious that, access to health services among ex-prisoners, is a global problem and, as several literature have shown that most of the ex-prisoners being having health problems, limited resources and facing discriminations on access to health and other socio-economic service.

4.0 Conclusion and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusion

Based on the presented findings the study draw the following conclusions:

Lack of Family Support during Imprisonment is one of the factors leading to psychological effects to ex-prisoners making them feel isolated and unwanted. Discrimination and Stigmatization is also a challenge to ex-prisoners, almost all ex-prisoners (93.8%) reported facing discrimination from their families and societies. This discrimination stems from a lack of trust in individuals with a history of imprisonment. Ex-prisoners are often stigmatized and labeled as criminals, which makes their reintegration into society challenging.

Many ex-prisoners face housing challenges, including eviction from government houses, being kicked out of tenement houses, homelessness, or living in deteriorating family homes. Landlords often neglect ex-prisoners, making it difficult for them to secure stable housing. The majority of ex-prisoners (80%) reported limited access to health services due to financial constraints, while some (20%) faced barriers related to eligibility for health insurance. This lack of access to healthcare can exacerbate their physical and mental health issues.

The findings indicated that the reintegration of ex-prisoners into society is a complex process. They often struggle with multiple challenges, including housing, discrimination, and healthcare access, which can increase the risk of reoffending and hinder their ability to lead productive lives.

4.2 Recommendations

Addressing the social challenges faced by ex-prisoners during their integration into society is crucial for their successful reintegration. This can be achieved through comprehensive measures that prioritize rebuilding their connections with family, friends, and the community, as well as equipping them with the necessary skills for employment and self-sufficiency. To tackle these challenges effectively, the following recommendations are proposed;

Fostering Social Support Networks; ex-prisoners should be provided with healthy social support systems to facilitate their reintegration. This includes establishing community-based programs such as support groups and organizations that offer counseling and psychological assistance to help them rebuild bonds with their families, friends, and society at large.

Empowering with Skills and Education; to enhance their chances of finding gainful employment or pursuing self-employment, ex-prisoners should have access to relevant and up-to-date training and educational programs. These initiatives should focus on developing job skills, enhancing social competencies, and improving their economic knowledge, ultimately empowering them to lead productive lives.

Removing Employment Barriers; one significant obstacle ex-prisoners face is the presence of employment restrictions due to their criminal records. To mitigate this challenge, it is essential to advocate for the removal of such barriers, ensuring that ex-prisoners have a fair chance at securing employment opportunities. This policy change is paramount in supporting their successful reintegration into society.

5.0 Policy Implications

Basing on the study the following are some potential policy implications that aim to address the social challenges facing ex-prisoners in Iringa Municipality, Tanzania, and create a more inclusive and supportive environment for their reintegration into society.

Employment Policy Reforms; the study underscores the need for policy reforms related to employment of ex-prisoners. Government and non-government organizations should advocate for policies that discourage discrimination against qualified and skilled ex-prisoners based on their criminal history. These policies should encourage employers to give fair consideration to ex-prisoners during the hiring process.

Community Integration Programs; to promote successful reintegration, government and non-government organizations should develop and support programs aimed at educating families and communities about the importance of welcoming and providing support to ex-prisoners. These programs should emphasize the value of inclusivity, love, and care in reducing the stress and loneliness experienced by ex-prisoners.

Psychological Support Services; the study highlights the psychological challenges faced by ex-prisoners during their reintegration. Policies should be established to ensure access to psychological support services that help ex-prisoners adapt to the changes in their community and develop coping mechanisms. This may include counselling, therapy, and mental health support.

Legal Reforms; policymakers should consider reforms that aim to reduce the long-term impact of criminal records on ex-prisoners' lives, such as the possibility of record expungement or sealing after successful rehabilitation and reintegration. Community Engagement and Awareness; government and non-government organizations should invest in community engagement and awareness campaigns to change societal perceptions and attitudes towards ex-prisoners. This

includes emphasizing their potential for positive contributions to society when given the opportunity.

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