

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 a case of Iringa Municipality. Questionnaires and key-informant interviews were used to collect quantitative data and qualitative respectively. 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 social challenges faced by ex-prisoners as they sought to reintegrate into their society that include discrimination by family members and society, difficulties in securing housing, and limited access to essential healthcare services. Based on these findings, the study recommendations include 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, 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). 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, but they have been facing numerous social challenges that have been limiting their integration (Oruta, 2016; Chanakira & Chikadzi, 2017; Chikadzi, 2017; Arabella, Brook, Matthew, 2019; Howak, 2020). 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 among others, 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 facilitate their integration in their societies, several challenges often outweigh the support systems resulting in high reoffending. In Africa, ex-prisoners encounter they lack welfare assistance as one of the important transitional resources after they are released from prison (O'Brien, 2019); that could easy 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). 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 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, were 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 and, those few were not on the social challenges

2.0 Material and Methods

2.1 Description of the Study Area

The research was conducted in Iringa Municipality Council, located 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 its north, it is bordered by Mtera Dam, while the southern boundary abuts Iringa District. The western boundary is shared with Iringa District, and the eastern border adjoins Kilolo District. Iringa Municipal Council covers a total area of 162 square kilometers and had a population of 151,343 according to the 2012 national census. The study specifically focused on five wards within the municipality, namely Kihesa, Isakalilo, Mlandege, Kwakilosa, and Kitanzini. As of 2022-2023, the population of Iringa Municipality had decreased to 111,036, and during the period from 2015 to 2022, there were 297 ex-prisoners in the area, including 97 who had reoffended after their release but had since completed their sentences and reintegrated into society. This high rate of recidivism in Iringa Municipal Council prompted the need for a comprehensive investigation into the social, economic, and psychological challenges faced by ex-prisoners during their reintegration, as previous studies, such as Ally (2022), primarily examined the psychological effects and coping strategies of ex-prisoners in the region.

2.2 Research Design

In this research, a cross-sectional research design was utilized to investigate the social challenges faced by ex-prisoners during their reintegration into Iringa Municipality's society. Cross-

sectional studies are commonly employed in social sciences, involving data collection from a specific population at a single time point example age, gender, income and educational level of the respondents making them cost-effective and time-efficient (Cherry, 2019; Kothari, 2014).

2.3 Target Population, Sample Size and Sampling techniques

2.3.1 Target population

The targeted population of the study were Ex -prisoners, Prison Officers, Legal officers, Parole officers, Community Service officers, Ward Executive Officers and Mtaa 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). For the purpose of this study a sample of 50 ex- prisoners from five wards each ward 10 ex-prisoners were purposively selected and they filled in questionnaires. The wards in where the sample size was obtained are Kihesa, Isakalilo, Mlandege, Kwa Kilosa, and Kitanzini wards. 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%)

2.3.3 Sampling Techniques

The research employed a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques: Purposive Sampling technique was used in selecting Iringa Municipal Council, wards and streets as the study area. The areas were selected because they serve as the headquarters for all prisons in the Iringa Region not only that but also they attracted many ex-prisoners who migrated to the town in search of employment opportunities. Furthermore, the technique was used to select individuals who met specific predetermined criteria, including prison officers, legal officers, parole officers, and community service officers. Snowball sampling technique was used to select ex-prisoners from streets and wards around Iringa Municipality. 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).

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.

3.0 Results and Discussions

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 social 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 finding 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.

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 counselling and psychological assistance to help them rebuild bonds with their families, friends, and society at large.

Community Integration Programs; to promote successful reintegration, government and non-government organizations should develop and support programs aimed at educating families and societies 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.

Ethical Approval and Consent

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.

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.

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.

6.0 Authors' Contributions

I, Anitha K. Benard conceptualized the research idea. I analysed the data, and wrote the draft of the manuscript. The final manuscript was read, edited and approved by the supervisors.

7.0 Conflict of Interest

Author has no conflict of interest with the study and the study findings, and the study was for academic purpose.

8.0 Funding Statement

Researchers' own sources of fund was used for the study

9.0 Acknowledgement

My sincere gratitude and appreciation to my research supervisors, Dr. Given Msomba and Dr. John Pesha for their insight, guidance and encouragement throughout the research process. It was great pleasure working with Dr. Given Msomba and Dr. John Pesha. Moreover, my appreciation is also extended to the District Municipal Director; Prison Officers; Legal Officers; Community Service Officers; Parole Officers; Ward Executive Officers; Street Executive officers and the ex-prisoners in Iringa Municipal for their cooperation during data collection. Lastly my family and my children Blessings Byera Hamisa and Merci Asimwe Ilhan for being supportive and encouraging me throughout my education endeavors.

10. REFERENCES

- A Life Course Approach to Chronic Disease Epidemiology (Diana Kuh and Yoav Ben-Shlomo Ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. 1997. ISBN 978-0-19-262782-7.
- Ally, R. A. (2022). The psychosocial effect of ex-prisoners and the mitigating strategies as they integrate into the community: a study of Iringa Municipality, Tanzania. *International Journal of Novel Research in Humanity and Social Sciences*, 9 (5), 7-16.
- Almalki, S. (2016). Integrating Quantitative and Qualitative Data in Mixed Methods Research-Challenges and Benefit: *Journal of Education and Learning*: 5, (3); 288-296 .
- APA. (2017). consensus workgroup policy Recommendation to the congress& Trump Administration on Behavioral Health in the Criminal Justice System. *The Prison Journal*.
- Arabella, K, Matthew E and Tegan, C (2019) "I changed and hid my old ways": how social rejection and social identities shape wellbeing among ex-prisoners. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 49 (5). pp. 283-294. ISSN 0021-9029
- Chanakira, P and Chikadzi, V. (2017). Challenges ex- offenders when reinterring into mainstream society in Gauteng, South Africa. *Social work/ Maatskaplika Werk*, 53, 2 (8), 288-300.
- Chen, P.C and Shields, B (2020). Career counselling ex-offenders: Issues and interventions. *Australian Journal of Career Development*. Vol. 29(1).Pp 36-43.
- Cherry, K. (2019). How Does the Cross-Sectional Research Method Work? *Journal on Features of a Cross-Sectional Study*. Vol 14(3). <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-a-cross-sectional-study-2794978>. retrieved on 28/10/2022.
- Chikadzi, V.(2017). Challenges facing ex-offenders when reintegrating into mainstream society in Gauteng, South Africa. Available at http://www.scielo.org.za/scielo.php?script=sci_arttext & pid=S0037-80542017000200008 retrieved on 27/10/2022.

- Cooke, C. L. (2005). Going home: Formerly incarcerated Africa-American men return to families and communities. *Journal of Family Nursing*, 11, 388-404.
- Cortes, K., & Rogers, S. (2018). Reentry housing options: *The policymakers' guide*. Council of state governments.
- Creswell, W. (2013). *Education research: planning conducting and evaluating qualitative research*. Boston: Person Education.
- Davis, C., Bhr, S. J., and Ward, C. (2012). The process of offenders' reintegration: Perceptions of what help prisoners reenter society. *Criminology and Criminal Justice*, 13(4), 446-469.
- Elder, Glen H.; Monica Kirkpatrick Johnson and Robert Crosnoe: The Emergence and Development of Life Course Theory. In: Jeylan T. Mortimer and Michael J. Shanahan (ed.). *Handbook of the Life Course*. Springer, 2003, ISBN 0-306-47498-0, pp. 3–19.
- Frank, W.J, Wang, A.E, Nunez-Smith, M, Lee, H and Comfort, M (2014). Discrimination based on criminal record and healthcare utilization among men recently released from prison: a descriptive study. *Journal of Health Justice*. 10.1186/2194-7899-2-6 2014, 2: Retrieved on 22 September 2023.
- Geger, A, Harding, J. D.& Henderson, H. (n.d.). A report by the Brookings AEI; chapter 7 "Prisoners Reentry", Working group on Criminal Justice reform, USA.
- Grommon, E, Rydberg, J.& Bynum, T. (2012). Understanding the challenges facing offenders upon their return to the community. *Michigan Justice Statistics Center; School of criminal justice*. Michigan State University.
- Grommon, E., Rydberg. & Bynum, T. (2012). *Understanding the challenges facing offenders upon their return to the community: Final report*. Michigan Justice Statistics Centre. School of criminal justice, Michigan state university.
- Harding, J.D, Wyse, J.B.J, Dobson, C.R and Morenoff, D.J (2014). Making Ends Meet After Prison. *Journal of Policy Analysis Management*. Vol. 34(2) Pp 440-470. *Doi:10.1002/pam.21741* Retrieved on 23 September 2023.
- Herrera, M. L, & McGiffen, M.E. (2015). Community attitudes towards early-release offenders under AB 109. *Electronic Thesis, Project and Dissertations*. California State University, San Bernardino.
- Holzer, H. J., Raphael, S., & Stoll, M. A. (2019). Employment barriers facing ex-offenders. *Urban institute reentry roundtable*, 1-23.
- James M. White; David M. Klein, eds. (2007). *Family theories* (3 ed.). Sage. p. 122. ISBN 978-1-4129-3748-1. Retrieved 2009-07-29.
- Janet Z. Giele and Glen H. Elder Jr., (eds) *Methods of Life Course Research: Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*, Sage Publications, 1998 ISBN 0-7619-1437-4
- Jobela, Z. (2018). *Perceptions of ex-offenders regarding re-integration into their communities; a case study of Engcobo local municipality (eastern cape province)*. A dissertation published in the university of Fort Hare.
- Kinner, A.S, Dooren, V.K, Boyle, M.F, Longo, M and Lennox, N (2014). *Journal of Health and Justice* 8 10.1186/2194-7899-2-4 2014, 2:4. Retrieved on 22 September 2023.
- Kothari, C. R. (2014). *Research Methodology Methods and Techniques*. New Age International Publishers, New Delhi.401 pp.

- Lovoy, L. (2014). *Life After Prison: Ex-Felons Often Struggle to Find a Job* – WBHM 90.3. Retrieved March 3rd, 2023, from <https://news.wbhm.org/feature/2014/life-after-prison-ex-felons-often-struggle-to-find-a-job>.
- Matasha, D.T (2015). Challenge faced by ex-inmate after their release from incarceration in the democratic South Africa. *African Journal of Criminology and Victimology*. Vol (2) Pp66-78
- Muasya, K. J. (2013). *Impact of prison rehabilitation programmes on self-sustainability of ex-convicts: a case of Thika Sub-County, Kenya*; A master research project: University of Nairobi.
- Murhula, B. B. P. & Singh, B. S. (2019). A critical analysis on offenders' rehabilitation approach in South Africa: A review of the literature, *African Journal of Criminology and Justice Studies*, 12 (1), 21-43.
- Naser, R.&Visher, C. (2016). Family members' experiences with incarceration and reentry, *Western Criminology Review* 7(2), 20-31.
- O'Brien, P. (2019). *Reducing barriers to employment for women ex-offenders: mapping the road to integration*. Safer foundation.
- Ondigo, Q and Rono, H (2020). The role of prison inmates' Socio-economic characteristics on Rehabilitation Outcomes. *International Journal of Management and Social Sciences*. Vol.16(4). Pp 121-138.
- Oruta, M. E. (2016). Challenges That Confront Offenders during Reentry into Kenyan Communities, *International Journal of African and Asian Studies*, 19, 57-66.
- Ricci, M. L & Barry, C. M. (2011). Challenges of reentering society for incarcerated African-American men, *Modern Psychological Studies*, 17(1), 13-20.
- Shanahan, Michael (2000). "PATHWAYS to adulthood in changing societies". Variability and Mechanisms in Life Course Perspective: 669.
- Taliaferro, W., Pham, D., Cielinski, A. (2020). *From incarceration to reentry*. CLASP.
- Travis, J. (2016). *But they all come back: challenges facing the prisoner Reentry*. Washington, DC: The Urban Institute Press.
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crimes (2012).
- United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (2017). Background checks: what employers need to know. Retrieved from https://www1.eeoc.gov/eeoc/publications/background_checks_employers.cfm.
- Western, B, Brag, A.A, Davis, J, and Sirois, C. (2014). *Stress and hardship after prison: Massachusetts*. USA.
- Western, B., Braga, A. A., Davis, J & Sirois, C. (2014). *Stress and hardship after prison*. Kirkland.