

**THE REHABILITATION OF FEMALE EX-CONVICTS IN
PRISON AND THEIR REINTEGRATION TO THE
COMMUNITY: THE CASE OF FEMALE EX-CONVICTS
DISCHARGED FROM KALITI PRISON IN ADDIS ABABA,
ETHIOPIA**

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, declare that this thesis is my own work and has not been presented or submitted partially or in full by any other person for a degree in any other university, and that all sources of materials used for the purpose of this thesis have been duly acknowledged.

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date: _____

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ABSTRACT

The study explored the rehabilitation and reintegration of female ex-convicts who were released from Kaliti Prison to the community in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The study answered the following research questions: What are the rehabilitation programs Kaliti prison provides to facilitate the reintegration of female ex-convicts before their release, what are the challenges female ex-convicts face upon their release and the coping mechanisms female ex-convicts employ to deal with the challenges they face. The study was guided by rehabilitation, reintegration, liberal feminism, Marxist feminism and labeling theories. Qualitative method was employed to collect and analyze the data needed to address the objective of the study. Eleven unstructured in-depth interview and three key informant interviews were conducted between April and June 2023. The study also relied on secondary documents to assess prison programs. The study began by assessing the rehabilitation programs and supports Kaliti Prison Administration provides to facilitate the reintegration of female ex-convicts before their release. The prison rehabilitation programs included social services, counseling, sport and recreation activities and awareness creation on law and ethical education for prisoners. However, not all female ex-convicts had gotten the opportunity to attend all the programs when they were in prison. The prison lacks financial and personal resources to provide the rehabilitation programs for all inmates. The female ex-convicts faced psychological problems such as anxiety and depression. The female ex-convicts also faced economic problems such lack of job opportunity and financial support. The study further noted that the female ex-convicts faced social challenges which are manifested through rejection by family members and being labeled as criminals after they were released and returned to the community. The female ex-convicts relied on religious support to cope with their psychological challenges. Furthermore, the female ex-convicts employed concealing criminal background and changing resident area as coping mechanism to deal with the negative reaction of the community. The study indicated that re-entry of female ex-convicts can be difficult. The experience female ex-convicts pass through after imprisonment could result in intense economic and social burden and may force them to recommit crimes. The prison shall design and implement better programs to prepare female inmates for successful reentry to their community upon release. Furthermore, intervention implementers and religious institutions should learn from experiences of other countries and provide some tangible and intangible support to help female ex-offenders.

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of the Study

A convict is a person found guilty of crime and sentenced by a court or a person serving a sentence in prison". Inmates are usually sent to prison or correctional facilities to serve their term of imprisonment (the free dictionary). Relatedly, an ex-convict is any individual who has been sentenced to a term of probation by a court of a given country who has been released from a correctional institution or prison. (www.law.cornell.edu).

Ideally, offenders in prison should correct their criminal behavior. Up on the completion of their term of imprisonment, inmates will be released from prison and supposed to reintegrate to the community. In fact, the transformation and rehabilitation by prisons' success depend on the reintegration of ex-convicts into their community. This implies prison sentences could incentivize individuals' willingness to live law-abiding and self-supported life. (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). However, reintegration into the community is not easy and several inmates may not successfully reintegrated into society. Indeed, most offenders face significant social adaptation issues, which can include family and community stigmatization which limits their opportunity to find jobs, return to formal education or build (or rebuild) and social capital (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2018). Females suffer more from such problem due to higher stigma attach to females offending. The effect of unsuccessful reintegration of incarcerated individuals could result in further commission of crime and could threaten society's security (United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, 2016).

As a result, individuals may rely on social efforts to assist them to reintegrate into their community. Supports such as social reintegration programs could be helpful for convicts during their reentry into society following imprisonment (Curt et al. 2007).

Researchers indicate that the high rate of recidivism points to the fact that ex-convicts face significant challenges in their bid to adjust to life outside prison. A prior research showed that most ex-convicts re-offend within three years after their initial release from prison. Generally, the propensity to commit a financial crime increases after prison time among convicted felons. However, an elevated socio-economic status reduces an ex-convict's propensity to commit financial crimes and recidivate. Therefore, it is expected that ex-convicts who participate in supervised community service will be less likely to commit financial crimes and recidivate (David 2019).

There is limited information about prison population and major crime activities in the country at national level. Old national reports indicate that on top of civil war, economic instability and famine, crime is one of the social problems Ethiopia faces. For instance, the Central Statistics Authority (2012) reports that 197,982 recorded crimes were committed by 314,338 offenders in 2007/8 in the country. Among these, theft, (30,846), assault (10,159) and rule breaking (44,949) were the most common crimes. Available data on prison population indicate that while there were 86,366 prisoners in the country in 2008/2009, this number shot up to 112,361 in 2009/2010 (Central Statistics Authority 2012). The actual current crime rate and prison population can exceed these figures by far. World Prison Brief revealed that in 2020 there were 110,000 prisoners in the country (WPB, nd).

Around the globe, the number of female offenders has grown quickly than male since around 2000 with the number of women and girls in prison increasing by more than 50% while the number of male prisoners has increased by about 20%. Similarly, in Ethiopia the number of female offenders has increased from 3% in 2001/02 to 5.3% in 2014 G.C. This figure places Ethiopia among African countries with the high female offender population (World prison brief report 2017).

Ethiopia has established a handful of federal prisons to provide custody to inmates and rehabilitation programs. Among these federal prisons is Kaliti prison, which is located in Addis Ababa, the capital of Ethiopia. Kaliti prison is the only Federal Prison in Addis Ababa that has a separate prison ward for women detainees (Alchetron, 2022). The prison has rehabilitation programs to correct women's undesirable behavior and help them become law abiding and productive citizens upon their release. It would be important to see if the prison programs help women to deal with the challenges they face after release (Kibur, 2013).

After released from prison, female ex-offenders could be worse considering the negative attitude towards female criminality. Female ex-convicts are vulnerable for different problems like substance abuse problems, lack of access to health care, mental health issues, post-traumatic stress disorder, inadequate educational and employment services, neighborhood conditions, community resources, public policies, and a lack of resources needed to obtain housing (Richie 2018 cited inn McIver (2010). A prior study also showed that female ex-convicts have more stressed relationships, more struggles with family, finding housing, than male ex-convicts (Beall, 2018).

To date, there is limited information on the reintegration of female ex-convicts in Ethiopia. Identifying the problems faced by female ex-convicts after their return to the community could

help develop gender aware reintegration strategy to reduce re-offending and other problems that resulted from lack of effective reintegration. In line with this, this study examined the reintegration experience of female ex-convicts to the community in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.

1.2. Statement of the Problem

Individuals who are released from prison face various challenges in social life. They found it difficult to reintegrate into their community successfully as they can be excluded from economic opportunities as well as social services. Having spent a considerable time in prison, they face the possibility of losing their social status, their job and their interpersonal relationship with family members, friends and neighbors (Timurturkan et al., 2017 cited in Savas et al 2018). A previous study has shown that social reintegration becomes difficult because they often encounter stigma which makes it harder for them. Finding a job is another barrier for the ex-offenders those to be successfully reintegrate into the community (Matcalf 2001).

Most offenders face significant social adaptation difficulties, which can include stigma and ostracism from families and the community. , These will negatively affect their ability to find jobs or living condition, return to formal education or build (or rebuild) individual and social life. Unless they receive help to face these issues, they risk getting caught up in a vicious cycle of failed social integration, re-offending, reconviction and social rejection (United National Office on Drug and Crimes, 2018).

Around the globe, the number of female offenders has grown quickly than male since around 2000 with the number of women and girls in prison increasing by more than 50% while the number of male prisoners has increased by about 20%. Similarly, in Ethiopia the number of female offenders

has increased from 3% in 2001/02 to 5.3% in 2014 G.C. This figure places Ethiopia among African countries with the high female offender population (World prison brief report 2017).

Stigmatizing inmates causes more harm than good for many reasons. Firstly, stigmatizing offenders can lead to recidivism. Secondly, stigmatizing can affect the self-esteem of an offender. Thirdly, stigmatizing can also result in the unintended consequence of causing stress and social isolation for the family of the offenders. Lastly, stigma will hinder an offender from re-integrating and contributing back to the society (Ukessay (2018)).

Although all offenders experience challenges during the reintegration process, the experience of female is unique due to, higher level of stigma attached to female offending, the additional demands of being reunited with their children and fulfilling their maternal role and social capital. This is due to the fact that for being inmate, she is separated from their children and beloved one, and this creates a barrier to regain the relationship with the family and community (reporter ethiopia.com 2021).

In Ethiopia prior studies have primarily concerned with conditions of detention and human rights issues of prisoners. Addisu (2012) revealed that prison condition is harsh in the country, with prisoners largely suffering from extreme overcrowding, malnutrition, and unhygienic conditions. Other studies have touched upon the issues of juvenile delinquency (Molalign 2012), crime trends (Nega, 2011), recidivism (Kibur, 2013). Abebaw (2019) found that Kaliti Prison rehabilitation program has been affected by limited resources. A recent study by Medreku (2018) found that ex-convicts face different socio-economic challenges and their prior prison experience hasn't improved their skills.

Although these studies have improved readers' understanding about crimes, criminals and prison conditions and programs, the knowledge obtained from these studies do not provide sufficient information about the reintegration of female ex-convicts in Ethiopia. There is limited information on the existence of gender sensitive rehabilitation programs that can facilitate female offenders' re-entry to their community in Ethiopian prisons. Female offenders need different rehabilitation programs as they face gender-specific challenges (PRI and ITI, 2019).

In addition, there is limited information about gender-specific emotional and socio-economic and challenges female ex-convicts face. To the best of the researcher's knowledge, there has also been little attempt to listen to female ex-convicts' strategy to cope with the challenges they face upon their discharge from prison and their integration strategy.

As it has been shown, little emphasis has been given to study the experience of female ex-convicts from a women-centered perspective. Thus, the study filled this gap by employing a qualitative researcher method.

1.3. Objective of the Study

1.3.1. General Objective

The general objective of this study was to explore the rehabilitation and reintegration of female ex-convicts that are discharged from Kaliti prison to the community.

1.3.2. Specific Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are to:

- Explore rehabilitation programs and supports Kaliti Prison Administration provides to facilitate the reintegration of female ex-convicts before their release;
- Examine the challenges female ex-convicts upon their release from Kaliti prison; and
- Assessing the coping mechanisms, the female ex-convicts employ to deal with the challenges they face upon release and their strategy to reintegrate into their community.

1.4. Significance of the Study

This study helped to identify the reintegrating experience of female ex-convicts to the community. This could help fill the gap in the literature regarding the lived experience of ex-convicts. So far, little has been done to show the unique experience of female ex-convicts from a women centered perspective with different theories.

The study can also inform interventions that aim at rehabilitating ex-convicts. It informs about the challenges female ex-convicts face after their release and way of addressing those challenges. The psychological, social and economic needs of the female ex-convicts will be revealed to interventions. In turn, this could help to design interventions that target these needs.

The study has also a potential to inform policy and programs related to reintegration of female ex-convicts to their community. As stigma could deny ex-convicts their basic and democratic rights, frameworks that assure equal treatment for all women should be put in place. The study

could inform such frameworks about the nature of stigma female ex-convicts face and the various actors involved in the process of the stigma.

1.5. Scope of the Study

This study explored the reintegration of female ex-convicts that were released from Kaliti prison to the community in Addis Ababa Ethiopia. The research objectives were only limited to studying reintegration programs and supports provided by Kaliti Prison Administration, by examining and the challenges female ex-convicts faced in the community after released from Kaliti prison and the coping mechanisms the female ex-convicts employ to deal with the challenges they face upon release. The study only employed qualitative research method. In addition, the study only targeted female ex-convicts who were living in Addis Ababa after they were released from Kaliti Prison.

1.7. Definition of Important Terms

Rehabilitation: Helping inmates to deter their criminal behavior and be law abiding and productive citizens

Ex-convict: A person who has been convicted to crime and released from prison.

Labeling: Labeling ex-convicts officially as criminals.

Reintegration: Reintegration refers to the process of transition from imprisonment into mainstream society. In this process, Ex-offenders begin to adjust to the outside world in the aftermath of their release and hopefully get to live a life that is free from crime (Davis et al. 2012). Reintegration has social and economic dimensions. The social dimension includes the female ex-offenders' social acceptance, social relationship and interactions in the community

which can be expressed in terms of their participations in informal social organizations like *iddirs*, religious groups...etc. Likewise, the economic dimension includes the female ex-offenders' access to employment (self-employment) opportunities, financial services or supports e.g. access to saving and credit, earning income, own properties and participation in economic organizations like small and medium scale enterprises.

Challenges: This refers to the psychological, social and economic problems female ex-convicts face after they complete their term of imprisonment.

Coping mechanism: This refers to the strategies and actions the female ex-convicts take to effectively deal with the challenges they face.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Theoretical Literature Review

2.1.1. Rehabilitation Theory

Prisons are established for the purpose of implementing judicial decisions. They are made responsible for the tasks of need to custody, reformation and rehabilitation of convicts, and duly contribute their share in crime prevention. Moreover, prisons have a role to carry out punishment for the purpose of the deterrence of crime and the incapacitation of criminals (Brown *et al.* 50-51). Among the most formulated theory of prison purposes is that of rehabilitation the idea that the purpose of prison sentence is to treat and train inmates to make them functional and law-abiding citizens upon their release. Established in legal practice in the 19th century, rehabilitation has been envisioned as a humane alternative to retribution and deterrence, though it did not necessarily result in less or lenient punishment (Allot et al. 2023).

2.1.2. Reintegration Theory

Reintegration theory posits that crime represents a breach or absence of community (Padayachee, 2008). Instead of blaming criminal for their crimes, exponents of reintegration theory assert that society may create conditions and strain to push people to commit crimes. Thus, it is the duty of societies to find a solution for the very problems they have created. Societies should be responsible to embrace ex-convicts after their release and help them to successfully reintegrate into the community (Glanz, 1993:3-5). Muntingh (2001) argued that the rationale for

reintegrating offender is based on two moral premises. Firstly, it is desirable for people to be in harmony with one another, and secondly, wherever harmony and community are absent, they should be actively pursued. Muntingh (2005) also noted that that harsh punishment and severe reaction stigmatized offenders. This could result in further violation laws in community and disruption of harmony in society. As a result, reform and reintegration of offenders should always be the ultimate aim of incarceration (Chikadzi, 2017)

2.1.3. Labeling Theory

One of the theories that could elaborate the stigma of female ex-convicts is labeling theory. According to Haralambos, Holborn and Robin (2004:347), labeling theory argue that reacting to people as “criminals” acts as self-fulfilling prophecy by initiating processes that make the person become a criminal – someone more deeply entrenched in a criminal career. Once the person bore the label of a “criminal,” it becomes a “master status” – the most salient public marker of that person. Being a “criminal” thus serves as the starting point and the basis of virtually every interaction of the person, a defining designation that cannot be escaped.

This theory gives explanation about social responses to crime and deviance. In its narrowest version it asks what happens to criminals after they have been labeled and suggests that crime may be highlighted by criminal sanction. Thus, sending an offender to prison may actually work to criminalize her further, and stigmatizing a young offender for minor infractions at too early an age may lead into a criminal career (Haralambos et al. 2004).

Criminal offender stigma has primarily been studied through the lens of Labeling Theory. Labeling theory in criminology states that being *formally labeled* as an offender (e.g. being incarcerated, receiving a felony conviction) causes one to internalize stigmatizing attitudes,

withdraw from conventional society, and conform to a deviant identity. Many empirical studies drawing upon this theory compare naturalistic groups of offenders who were convicted or served time in jail versus those who had charges dropped/dismissed, sometimes showing that the former group (i.e. labeled individuals) recidivate more than those who were not formally labeled. However, psychological research shows that not everyone in a stigmatized group experiences negative outcomes, despite all being formally labeled with a stigmatized identity (Kelly *et al* 2015).

To sum up, labeling theory demonstrates that after serving time in prison, people will be labeled by the community. The labeling may tarnish the reputation of individuals. This in turn pays the way for the stigma of ex-convicts. In this study, the labeling theory was used to examine the interaction of female ex-convicts with family members, friends and relatives after they completed their term of imprisonment. The theory guides the study to look at how the aforementioned individuals perceived the female ex-convicts.

2.1.4. Marxist Feminism

Marxist feminists criticize the capitalistic mode of production as one of the main causes for male domination and female oppression in society. They made an attempt 'to locate a material basis for women's subjugation; to find a relationship between the modes of production and women's status; to determine, in other words, connections between the realms of production and reproduction'. Males meet the demand for 'production' and 'creating surplus' by working outside. So, the place of men is in public space. But women work within the homes and involve in the biological reproduction process (giving birth and maternal role). The men's jobs that secure the economic sustenance of the family, this places men in a dominating and powerful

position. Though this male domination prevailed in the past, with the advent of the capitalistic mode of production, the dichotomy between ‘public’ and ‘private’ spheres became institutionalized and male domination became almost unavoidable. According to Engels the main solution for the subjugation of women is they should enter to the public sphere by facilitating education, creating job opportunity, using political and legal reform (Hossain et al 2016).

Marxists tend to view capitalism as the only cause of crime, and they insist that class and class values are generated by the material conditions of social life. Because only the material conditions of life really matter, the only way to make any serious impact on crime is to eliminate the capitalist mode of production and institute a Marxist social order. Left realists realize that such a radical transformation is highly unlikely in modern times, and although they maintain a critical stance toward the system, they work within it to influence social policy (Walsh 2012).

Marxist Feminism could also be used to explain the challenges women face after they did their time in prison. According to Marxist Feminism the most important reason for the subjugation of women in society is class or economic position. Plummer and Macionis, (2008). Women in most human societies do not own economic resources. As a result, they are likely to be dominated by men. Lack of access to economic resources could lead to women’s criminality. Although there is little information about what Marxist feminism assert about the stigma of ex-convicts, we can extrapolate those female ex-convicts would struggle to gain access to economic resources after they are discharged from prison. In turn, they could be marginalized by the community. This again could make things worse and deny economic opportunities such as employment.

Walsh (2012), found that modern Marxist criminologists tend to excuse criminals.

William Chambliss (1976) tried to see some criminal behavior like no more than the 'rightful' behavior of persons exploited by the extant economic relationship and according to Ian Taylor (1999) found that the convict as an additional victim of the routine operations of a capitalist system a victim, that is of 'processes of reproduction' of social and racial inequality. Marxist criminologists also appear to view the class struggle as the only source of all crime and to view "real" crime as violations of human rights, such as racism, sexism, imperialism, and capitalism, and accuse other criminologists of being parties to class oppression.

Capitalism is a cause of crime and People denied from their economic opportunity because of community stigma. Ex-convicts face economic challenges such as difficulty of finding stable employment, housing and lack of job trainings. As evident in Marxist feminism, female ex-convicts are mostly uneducated and have skills only for blue collar activities. Upon release, they struggle to get even these jobs and may return to crime a desperate attempt to survive (Taraporewala, 2022).

2.1.5. Liberal Feminism

Liberal feminists argue that it is not men and women specifically who make things unequal, but that the rules that have been put in place oppress women and they are in need of change for women to have opportunities for success (Belknap, 2001; Donovan, 2000; Gerson, 2002; Simpson, 1989).

Among theories of feminism, liberal feminism can also help elaborate the stigma of female ex-convicts.

Samkange (2015:1174) summarizes liberal feminism by the following statements quoted below.

'Liberal Feminists have moderate aims, their views do not radically challenge the existing values and as such they aim for gradual change in the political, economic and social system (Haralambos and Holborn, 2008). Gender disparities are therefore attributed to several factors. Such factors include culture, and the way men and women are socialized within that culture. The other factors are closely related to the attitudes of the individual. All these can be changed through empowerment and education. In essence, liberal feminism is for gradual reforms through advocacy for equal rights for all, and laws and policies that promote equality''.

Liberal Feminism asserts that customs and legal restraints are among the root causes of gender inequality (Ritzer, 2011). Although, criminality is usually discouraged and seen as undesirable behavior among many societies, there is a tendency to tolerate crimes committed by men. On the contrary, there are customs and norms that discourage females' criminality. Societies highly condemn female convicts and treat them accordingly. This could lead to the stigma of ex-convicts and relate experience after prison.

Yeshimebet (2008) has explained liberal feminists, this feminist theory stated the prevailing situation and position of the majority of Ethiopian women who are denied of their equal rights due to deep rooted patriarchal system (related with the custom of the society). Their focus on eradicating gender inequality through promoting women's rights, interests, and issues in society was the other reason behind the preference of liberal feminist theory. Furthermore, liberal feminists have supported and advocated for the development and revision of laws and legislation that remove the barrier for women. These acts of legislation demand equal opportunities and

rights for women, including equal access to jobs and equal pay. In addition, they also believe that remove the barrier for women. These barriers directly challenge the ideologies of patriarchy, and lead to the liberation of women.

As discussed above the three theories offer various and complementary explanations about the experiences of female ex-convicts. The study will draw assumptions from each theory to study and analyze the reintegration experience of female ex-convicts discharged from Kaliti Prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. For instance, labeling theory helps us understand the social challenges such as the stigma and labeling female offenders face upon release. Marxist feminism, on the other hand, provides assumptions about the economic challenges females face and how it could affect their re-entry. Drawing on the assumptions of liberal feminism, this study was explored how society's customs and norms could affect the reintegration of female ex-convicts.

Therefore, the reviewed theories helped the researcher to design a research question, guiding relevant data, giving explanation about the issue and interpret the data by underlying the causes of observed and included phenomena.

2.2. Review of Related Empirical Studies

2.2.1. Prisons Rehabilitation Program and Supports for Female Inmates

The treatment of female offenders had not received sufficient attention due to their small population in comparison with male offenders. However, the population of female offenders is on the rise in many nations recently, which has increased the demand to enhance treatment of female offenders. In many countries, female inmate's rehabilitation has not received the same level of attention as of that of male offenders. This should not be the case. (Bravo *et al*).

As discussed in the problem statement section, little has been carried out to examine gender-specific programs in Ethiopia. According to Abebaw (2019), Kaliti prison's correctional and rehabilitation center had many administrative, infrastructural and resource related barriers. Despite these challenges, the prison had opportunities to get support from concerned governmental stakeholders and NGOs. It can also benefit from knowledgeable and skilled inmates in the prison who can contribute to the improvement and development of the rehabilitation program. However, because of administrative and legal framework problems, Abebaw (2019) concluded, the prison administration failed to use such opportunities.

According to Addisu (2012), federal prisons in Ethiopia are overcrowded, lack natural light and ventilation, provide inappropriate food and lack hygiene. He also noted the prisons lack proper medical services (including psychiatric treatment), and a lack of recreation or educational facilities violates UN Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of prisoners (Addisu, 2012). This has an undesirable effect on efforts to rehabilitate offenders.

Kibur (2013) found that Kaliti prison has put in place rehabilitation and development programs to reform the behavior of detainees. However, he argued that inadequate resources, shortage of profession in the prison have affected the provision of rehabilitation programs. Kibur (2013) focused on repeat offenders and showed that there was no cascaded rehabilitation program for recidivists. The researcher hasn't provided any evidence on gender-specific programs in the prison.

Yeshimebet (2008) revealed that in Kimbibiti and Debere-Birhan prisons there is no special treatment for women prisoners starting from the time of incarceration. What is provided under the law is punishment not treatment. The prison lacks social services that are useful for

rehabilitating inmates like education and different skill trainings. Female offenders are not given enough considerations and treatments that are directed to rehabilitate from their undesirable behavior. In addition to this, the majority of the convicted women offenders believed that the longer the imprisoning time without any rehabilitation services has a punitive effect than being educative, and it has a tendency of leading the prisoners, to hatred and revenge towards the society. Yeshimebet (2008).

Yelfigne (2007) found that female inmates were discriminated in prison compared to the treatment given to male inmate, the rehabilitation services and facilities were not equally distributed. Female offenders were usually spending their time by preparing food for the whole prison community. However, she urged that the prison has no rehabilitation program and support designed based on the interest of female inmates. Yelfigne (2007) focused on female suspected and convicted of murder.

The above two researchers haven't provided about the impact of rehabilitation programs of prison on ex-convicts when they reintegrate with the community. Female inmates are much more responsibility for the care of children, the maintenance of the home and social capital than male inmates. Because of this, the impact of prison is harsh and disproportionate for many female prisoners, and this may result during their reintegrating to the community loss of their home, mental health and serious disruption to the lives of their children.

Usually, female inmates get support and treated in prison that were designed for men designed for male used and their gender specific need were ignored, gender specific need is very important for women because female are differ by physical, social and psychological need (Muthe 2020).

According to TIJ, ex-convicts' reentry to the community is very difficult and they may suffer from depression and anxiety after they release. In this circumstance, the role of prison system and rehabilitation program is high by preparing prisoners for release by building their self-esteem, confidence and independence. In-prison programs female prisoners prepare to adapt to life in the community by teaching them life and relationship skills and how to deal with situations that may arise. This could include problem solving, communication, self-assertiveness, anger management and conflict resolution. Rehabilitation Programs and supports that educate women on their rights are also particularly important. Programs that are linked to community initiatives can be particularly beneficial as they can provide continuity of support post-release (Thailand institute of justice, 2019).

2.2.2. Challenges Faced by Ex-Inmates after Release from Prison

Upon their release, ex-convicts face can often be more punishing than the prison sentence itself. They face a number of emotional, social and economic challenges. Mihiret (2018) found that ex-convicts in Ethiopia suffer from loneliness, depression, anxiety, and stress. Beside this ex-convict face social problems. For instance, Kibur (2019) found that ex-convicts' families and their community tend to distance themselves from ex-convicts instead of giving them psychological support. But the researcher only focuses on recidivism, and he did not give emphasis the particular challenge female ex-convicts face and how that has affected their reintegration.

On top of this, ex-convicts face economic challenges. A recent study by Medreku (2018) revealed that ex-convicts face major challenges to get startup capital, training opportunities and materials to start a new business. Mihiret (2019) further revealed that although ex-inmates have

the necessary skills and qualifications, they are denied employment opportunities. And many employers are refused to hire ex-convicts because of their past experience. The reviewed literature has shown that ex-convicts face major socio-economic challenges.

Also, ex-convicts face mental health problem. Ex-inmates face different psychological challenges when they released from prison for instance isolation, stigma, discrimination and instability. This can lead serious mental health problem like anxiety, depression and post-traumatic stress disorder (Sheppard 2021).

The additional psychological challenge is inferiority complex many ex-convicts affected by feeling of inferiority. When ex-inmate stays in prison for a long period of time they may feel of inactiveness. By the time of come out from the prison ex-convicts had lost out on opportunities compared to their family and friends. This leads to a lot of stress, depression and regret, which are difficult to deal with. It contributed to feelings of inferiority and regret, which are a psychological burden necessitating professional help and support. This inferiority complex affects ex-inmates mental health (Chanakir & Chikadzi 2017).

Rejection by Family members and stigmatized by community members is the other challenges of ex-convicts. When a person commits a crime, most of the community will know about it. Ex-convicts noted that after prison their family members and people from the community rejected them. This made it difficult for ex-offender to reintegrating with a community (Chanakir & Chikadzi 2017).

Yelfigne (2007) revealed that female offenders after they released from prison they wouldn't go back to their home because the community stigmatized and there family did not accept them. Also they have a fear of attack by families of deceased person, revenge of deceased person

family and feeling of guilty consciousness. However, there is little information about gender-specific challenges women offenders face upon their release.

2.2.3 Coping Mechanisms the Female Ex-Convicts Employ to Deal with Challenges their Strategy to Reintegrate into their Community.

Although ex-convicts could face major challenge after they complete their term of imprisonment, they employ different strategies to deal with the challenges they face. For instance, Muthee (2020) found that ex-convicts try to conceal their criminal history and migrate to unknown places to start a new life.

One of coping mechanism women ex-convicts use to reintegrate into their community is migration. Ex-inmates migrate to a new place to find sustainable place to live and they find menial jobs and separate from their spouses then got remarried because they want to find a new family because of the stigma they face (Muthee, 2020).

Bosi (2021) found that spiritual belief helped to change ex-convicts. Spiritual learning and religious involvement help reshape the significance of ex-offenders' purpose and belonging in society and make their life easier. Another study also confirmed that religious play important role in helping ex-offenders to reentry their communities (Irfan, 2022). This coping mechanism may help ex-convicts to avoid engaging in further criminal behavior and recidivism (Bosi 2021).

A previous study also found in America, to address the reentry barriers the first coping strategy is social networking. The report showed that facilitating reintegration efforts by creating partnerships between communities, corrections and law enforcement, and other public services to design and implement reentry and reintegration strategies, with a special emphasis on engaging

community resources, including faith institutions and community-based organizations and ex-offenders could bring desirable results. Such approach that involves several stakeholders and community-based approach in planning and decision-making reentry and reunification programs are optimal ways that could assist successful reintegration of ex-offenders. (The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2005).

The same report also found that strengthening the relationship between ex-offenders and family members, provision of counseling for ex-offenders and anti-substance abuse therapy and helping ex-offenders to reassume roles and enter new roles in their community assists the reintegration process. In addition to this, the report noted the government should reduce ex-offenders legal and practical barriers to reintegration, including legal barriers to accessing employment, housing, and other benefits and services, as well as the loss of the right to vote (The Annie E. Casey Foundation 2005).

Not many studies have explored about the coping mechanism female ex-convicts employ to successfully reintegrate into their communities in Ethiopia. Female ex-offenders can use some strategies to withstand the challenges they face due to their criminal background and to reentry their communities. A recent study revealed that ex-convicts frequently visit religious places to deal with depression. Unfortunately, some relied on substances to deal with their depression. (Mihiret, 2018). Besides this, the mechanisms female ex-convicts employ to effectively deal with the socio-economic challenges remain unknown. Thus, this study would fill this gap by providing detail information on how female ex-offenders try to cope with their challenges and reentry to their communities upon release.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD OF THE STUDY

3. Research Design

A qualitative research approach was employed to collect and analyze the data need to address the specific objectives of the study. According to Creswell 2007, qualitative research method is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Additionally, qualitative research method helps to answer a question and understand participant's perspectives and experience (K. Hammarberg *et al* 2016). Qualitative research can be used to understand how an individual subjectively perceives and gives meaning to their social reality (McLeod 2019). Qualitative method was chosen as it is suitable to examine the experience of female ex-convicts, the prison programs they had attended, the challenges they faced after they completed their term of imprisonment.

3.1. Study Setting and Target Population

The study was conducted in Addis Ababa Ethiopia between March and June, 2023. Female ex-convicts who were living in Addis Ababa after serving time in Kaliti prison and reintegrating with their community were targeted in the study. The researcher first visited Kaliti Prison to identify potential participants for the study and examine rehabilitation programs. Female offenders who are about to complete their term of imprisonment were approached with the help of prison administration and requested for their willingness to take part in the study. Contacts (living residence, private/family phone number etc.) of the female inmates who were willing to participate in the study were recorded because after the female ex-convicts complete their term

of imprisonment, the researcher contacted the female ex-prisoners after a couple of weeks for interviews.

3.2. Sample Selection

The research purposively selected potential participants considering their immediate availability and willingness to take part in the study. Moreover, snowball sampling was used as a technique to select a respondent. As some participants, who were contacted at Kaliti prison, were not willing to take part in the study, the researcher identified additional female ex-convict with the referral of another female ex-convict. A list of female inmates who were about to complete their sentences was taken from Kaliti prison. To have maximum variation of views, the researcher included married and unmarried, young, adults, females with no formal education and with formal education, with better economic status and low economic status. All of the female participants were accused of crime against property such as theft, fraud and corruption. On top of this, the researcher conducted three key informant interviews with Kaliti prison ward, a psychologist working in the prison a staff of an NGO known as Justice for All-Prison Fellowship.

3.3. Primary and Secondary Data

The researcher collected secondary data from prison regulation published reports about female offenders, articles on the reintegration female ex-convicts and theoretical books. Most of the secondary data were accessed from the interested and the prison regulation was obtained from Ethiopian Federal Prison Administration.

The study mainly relied on primary data collected from female ex-convicts through in-depth interviews. A total of 11 in depth interviews were conducted with the females between March and June, 2023. Although I had planned to conduct interviews to the point of data saturation only 11 female ex-convicts were willing to take part in the study. The researcher developed interview checklist in line with the research objectives. Furthermore, key informant interviews were conducted with a prison administrator, a professional working on rehabilitation unit, a staff of an NGO. The research developed interview guide in order to assess existing rehabilitation programs and supports at Kaliti Prison.

3.4. Data Collection

The research commenced the fieldwork by taking a letter of introduction to Ethiopian Federal Prison Federal Commission from Center of Gender Studies, Addis Ababa University. The Commission granted permission and sent a letter to Kaliti Prison Administration. The Kaliti Prison wards were initially hesitant to give list of female inmates stating that the research would be conducted later outside the prison. The researcher demonstrated that only prisoners who are willing to take part in the study would be contacted upon their release. The prison administrator finally agreed to identify 20 female inmates. The researcher then met with the females in Kaliti prison at office of the wards. The females were briefed about the study; all agreed to take part in the study and gave their address. i.e. phone number of their family members. The researcher then waited about a month till the females settled in. The researcher approached the female ex-convicts via phone. The researcher was only able to contact with 12 ex-inmates using the provided addresses. From these two were not willing to participate without giving any reason for their refusal. One of the ex-convicts referred the researcher to her friend who also released from

Kaliti prison two months back. The researcher approached and included this female as she was willing to take part in the study.

The researcher then conducted in depth interviews with the female ex-convicts in private location such as their residence. In addition, two interviews were conducted quite cafes, restaurants. The interviews on average took 45 minutes. About seven interviews were recorded with female inmates and with the staff of an NGO. The researcher took detail notes during the interview sessions with prison ward and a professional. In addition, as five female ex-convicts were not willing to be recorded, the researcher took notes. All in-depth and key informant interviews were conducted in Amharic language. The data collection was completed on July 10, 2023.

3.5. Data Analysis

The analysis started right after the key informant and in-depth interviews were conducted. The researcher transcribed the recorded data word by word and translated it into English. In addition, detail notes taken during the interviews were added and the verbatim transcriptions expanded.

The researcher then read the transcripts carefully and coded all interview transcripts line by line manually. The research objectives were changed into major themes and findings were coded to reflect sub themes under each research objectives. The findings are presented and discussed in line with the research objectives and verbatim are provided to support arguments in each section. Published articles and other documents were also analyzed along with the primary data to answer the research objective.

3.6. Ethical Consideration

The researcher conducted the study by respecting research ethics principles. The study was conducted with the permission of Federal Prison Commission and Kaliti Prison Administration. Mostly importantly, the study only involved females who were willing to participation in the study. Each interview started after briefing the females about the aim of the study. The females were informed to skip any question they would not like to answer or quit from the interview if they found the questions to be emotionally challenging. The study was strictly confidential and the personal information (names, addresses etc.) of the female ex-convicts were not collected and reported in the thesis to compensate their time, the female ex-convicts were given 100 ETB as incentive.

Attempts were made to assure the quality of the data. Data were recorded and details note were taken for interviews. I summarized the responses of my informants and asked them for confirmation. Recordings were transcribed verbatim, and I coded transcripts line by line. Themes and findings were substantiated by verbatims, and I included common as well as unique experiences.

CHAPTER FOUR

DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

This chapter provides the results and interpretation of the study findings. The findings are presented in line with the three specific objectives of the study and discussed alongside findings of prior studies and theoretical assumptions. The first section presents the prison rehabilitation programs and supports female ex-convicts received during their conviction. The second section discusses female ex-convicts' post prison challenges; and the third section provides the major coping mechanisms the female ex-convicts used to cope with their challenges.

All of the study participants were living in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia after they completed their term of imprisonments. Four of them were born and used to live in Addis Ababa before their conviction while the remaining seven came from Amhara, Oromia and Southern, Nation and Nationalities and People's Regions. Most of them had no formal education. Almost all respondents were below the age of 40. Although it is difficult to establish any form of association between age and the experience of female ex-convicts due to the qualitative nature of the study, scholars argued that young age is usually associated with crimes as young people consider crime to be rewarding financially. (Siegel, 2000; Rosenfield *et. al* 2005 cited in Bahati & Piquero 2008). However, eight of the study participants reported that they were convicted for crimes they haven't committed. This could be one their way of maintaining their good names. They may want to appear that they are innocent.

4.1. Prison Regulation, Rehabilitation Programs and Supports

Ideally speaking inmates are supposed to deter their criminal behavior while servicing their sentences in prisons. To this end, prisons put in place rehabilitation programs and supports. Guided by Ethiopian Prison regulation, Kaliti prison also attempts to improve the behavior of inmates through various rehabilitation programs and supports.

4.1.1. Prison Regulation

Ethiopia amended the penal code in 2011 with the aim of better maintaining social peace and security. This aims to protect society by deterring the commission of crimes through punishment as the primary means. It is also based on the assumption that punishment can deter inmates from committing other crimes, acts as a warning to potential inmates (Kibur 2013).

Convicts are sent to prison to be temporarily deterred from committing further crimes. If prison wards believe that inmates have improved their behavior and deter their criminal tendency, they may be released on parole before serving their sentences. This helps ex-inmates live a peaceful life and demonstrated the main goal criminal law places on their rehabilitation (Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia 2011).

The fact that convicts, instead of being receiving harsh treatments in prison, take vocational training and participate in academic education, which would benefit them upon their release, reaffirms the important principle and concern about the reform of criminals that are at the basis of Criminal Code (Criminal Code of the Federal Democratic Republic Of Ethiopia 2011). The Ethiopian criminal code also encourages inmates to take vocational and academic education and training inside prisons as this could help them better reintegrate into their society upon release.

4.1.2. Prison Programs

Kaliti prison implements the provisions of Regulations NO.138/2007 issued by Council of Ministers on the Treatment of Federal Prisoners. These regulations provide detailed guidelines on issues clothing, bedding, sanitation, food, medical services and other services aimed at rehabilitating detainees.

4.1.2.1. Rehabilitation division

According to the key informants, Kaliti Prison provides social services, counseling, sport and recreation activities and awareness creation on law and ethical education for inmates.

4.1.2.1.1 Social Services

The prison provides training on how to live with other inmates inside the prison in harmony. A key informant reported:

“Since inmates come from different backgrounds, they may find it difficult to live with other inmates peacefully. Thus, upon arrival, we will give orientation about the prison and its facilities. We also give them training on how they can accommodate their differences and live peacefully inside the prison (KII, Psychologist at Kaliti prison).

However, the ex-convict who took part in the study reported that they didn't take any training regarding social services. As a result, some of the ex-convicts reported that they found it difficult to adjust to prison life in their prior conviction. In this regard, one participant said, *“When I was admitted to prison, it was entirely a new world for me. I had little idea what a prison life looks like and really didn't know what to do. The prison wards and professionals did not help me to adopt to prison life (IDI, female ex-convict, age 38).* Furthermore, female prisoners who have

dependent children, during their imprisonment, found it difficult to deal with the separation. And there is no service to help them with their separation. A key informant said “*Some of the women prisoners suffer from separating from their kids*”. In addition, the prison did not provide orientation regarding raising children in the prison. One of the female ex-convicts who participated in the study said that she gave a birth to her daughter when she was in prison, and she knew little about how to raise children inside prison. Thus, prison rehabilitation programs should be responsive to females’ social roles and unique needs. If not, the females may not be rehabilitated well. This in turn could affect their attempt to reintegrate into their community when they complete their imprisonment. On the contrary, one participant reported that she was given orientation when she was admitted to Kaliti Prison. She said, “*I was told about what was expected from me by the prison officers. I was told about what is allowed and not allowed in prison. That helped me to adjust myself* (IDI, female ex-convict, age 37). As the responses are contradicting, further research could be conducted to verify the contradicting reports. However, the fact that some female ex-convicts reported that they haven’t received any social services could indicate the need to provide the services for all inmates.

4.1.2.1.2. Counseling

The study found that the prison also provides counseling services for inmates. The counseling service aims to solve the psychological challenges inmates face inside the prison. Those inmates who are perceived to have psychological problems such as depression could be reported by their cell mates. In addition, the prison wards and professionals could identify these inmates during weekly rounds. However, the key informants reported that due to lack of adequate staff, the prison could not successfully solve the psychological problems of inmates particularly for those with severe depression.

Participants in the study stated counseling services are available inside the prison. However, all of the participants did not get the service as they perceived that they did not need the service. One participant said, “I did get counseling service when I was in prison. Yet, I have seen some inmates getting the service. We used to inform for the prison wards if some inmates look sick. The professionals come and check if the inmates need counseling during weekly rounds (IDI, female ex-convict, 29 years old).

A key informant noted that “*Some of the inmates have a severe depression, however, in my opinion; we could not improve their mood through our counseling*”. *No one has been trained in prison counseling. We only give them some advice. We don't have a formal mechanism of behavior modification program where we can follow their progress. Some of them need a medical intervention by psychiatrists. But we don't refer them to a psychiatrist hospital. Inmates with physical injuries or pain are usually referred to hospitals.* (KII, Psychologist, Kaliti Prison).

The adverse impact of the shortage of professional on rehabilitation of inmates has been observed by a prior study (Kibur, 2013). Hiring psychiatrists could help improve the counseling service and improve the mental health of inmates.

4.1.2.1.3. Sport and Recreation

In line with the Federal Regulation on the Treatment of Federal Prisoners, that states any prison shall provide prisoners with the necessary and conducive physical education and exercise Kaliti prison organizes sport activities. The ex-convicts who participated in this study reported that they used to engage in sport and recreation activities while they were serving their sentences. This could have helped to cope with some of the challenges in prison. One female ex-convict said, “I

used to play volleyball with other prisoners. When I feel depressed, I usually go out and play” (IDI age 23). Such activities have a potential to protect inmates from prison trauma and could be helpful for the reintegration of females upon release. Inmates who less traumatized and bad prison experience may find it easy to forget their past and to start a new life.

4.1.2.1.4. Awareness Creation on Law and Ethical Education

The key informants reported that inmates received awareness creation training on law, inmates’ rights and obligations and substance abuse. According to key informants, as part of Kaliti prison’s effort to make inmates law abiding citizens, inmates are provided with trainings on rules and regulations they should respect inside the prison. In addition, trainings that aim at making inmates refrain from substance use inside the prison.

As discussed Kaliti Prison provides rehabilitation programs to improve the behavior of inmates. The fact that all training activities are given by female professionals is encouraging female inmates could be more comfortable to share their concerns to females. Yet, as discussed, due to lack of sufficient professionals, the prison could not provide the rehabilitation programs for all inmates.

Through awareness creation on law and ethical education programs are meant to improve the behavior of inmates, help them conform to the prison norms and prepare them to the prison environment. It appears that the rehabilitation programs are not gender sensitive. The female inmates have different needs and roles and the prison rehabilitation programs do not seem to take this into account. As community reacts bitterly to female criminals, females do not easily adjust to prison life. A prison psychologist explained “When females come to prison, they come with a

very low self-confidence. Most of them are ashamed and do not easily integrate to inmates as men (KII, prison, psychologist at Kaliti Prison).

According to a key informant, female inmates also play different roles in their communities such as engaging in social activities, *Idir* and *Mahiber*. And when they are sent to prisons, they can no longer practice these roles. Although this is the same with men inmates as well, the women could be more attached to these responsibilities and roles. And in prison, they may suffer as they lack the experience of engaging in meaningful activities.

4.1.2.2. Educational Programs

On top of correcting the inmate's criminal behavior through rehabilitation programs, Kaliti prison provides academic education and vocational training. These education and trainings are meant to improve the knowledge and skills of inmates which could help them find a better opportunity upon release. This could also help them reintegrate with their communities.

The formal education opportunity at Kaliti prison is described by a key informant as follows:

“We provide formal education starting from grade five up to twelve. Mostly, those inmates with long prison sentences attend formal education. We also provide adult education for those inmates who have no formal education (KII, psychologist in Kaliti prison).”

In addition, Kaliti prison provides vocational trainings. A vocation school known as *Tesfa* Technical and Vocational Trainings College provides formal and informal training for inmates in the Prisons. Inmates have an opportunity to attend Accounting, Information Technology and Information Communication Technology courses in the prison. Furthermore, informal training is provided for inmates. These include carpentry, food preparation, fattening animals, hairdressing,

tailoring, leather work, flour milling and baking, knitting and basic computer skill trainings etc. A key informant noted, *“Inmates are trained in various vocational skills. The vocational trainings are offered to inmates in line with their needs and preferences (KII, Psychologist at Kaliti Prison).* Female ex-convicts who took part in the study also confirmed that they took vocational trainings during their prior conviction at Kaliti prison. One of the respondents reported, *“During my stay in Kaliti prion, I have trained on making candle holder, basket and lace (Female ex-convict, age 20).* Another female ex-convict said, *“When I was in prison, I took vocational training and I used to make bags, knitting baskets, nets and laces, and then I used to send money to my family (IDI, female ex-convict, age 37).*

These training are meant to help inmates develop the skills that are essential in obtaining gainful employment after they complete their term of imprisonment. In line with this, the key informants reported that the trainings help inmates to learn knowledge and skills. A key informant stated, *“Once they have completed their trainings and completer their sentences, they could get job opportunities”.* However, the prison doesn’t have any program or initiative to liaise ex-convicts to potential employers. A key informant noted *“Currently, we do not try to find a job for trained inmates upon their release, but we are planning to link them to employers by working with different organization” (KII, staff of prison administration).*

As noted by Brown formal education at prison can improve behavior by altering attitudes, values, skills, or constitutional features that cause criminal behavior (Brown et.al. 2010:51). The vocational trainings and formal education also help inmates to deter their criminality and reintegrate their communities successfully. In relation to this, a staff of an NGO that works on prison inmates shared the following opinion. He said:

The programs inmates undergo inside while in prison can play a decisive role in their life after release. Rehabilitation activities at a prison center not only improve inmate's criminal behavior but also their future relationship with the community, up on release. If prisoners are well rehabilitated, they would easily reintegrate into their communities. So, their reintegration is partly related to prison programs (KII, staff of NGO).

This benefit of the training for reintegration could not be assessed from the female ex-convicts' perspective. All the participants had short prison sentences. As a result, they did not attend formal education in the prison.

Wood (2023) noted that education in the prison can shift the prison culture by reducing violence and making facilities safer for inmates and prison staff members. In addition to this prison education program and skill trainings can reduce recidivism (Wood 2023).

The Ethiopia Federal prisoners' regulation declares that particular attention shall be given to provide educational opportunities to female and juvenile prisoners. One of the challenges in providing this to female inmates was short prison sentence. Females with short prison sentences find it difficult to take part in education and vocational programs. Inmates should stay a minimum of a year to attend academic education. Most of the female ex-convicts revealed that they could not participate in formal education and vocational trainings as they stayed in Kaliti prison for less than a year. One of the participants said, “*I was sentenced to one year and then I lived in prison for two months and 10 days. Due to COVID-19, some prisoners were released before they completed their sentence. I was among those. I didn't get any training and education because I stayed in Kaliti prison for a short time (IDI, female ex-convict, age 18).* This is

understandable as taking part in academic education may require at least one year. However, the prison shall provide short term vocational training for female inmates.

Although not many, some females could not attend vocational training inside the prison due to their reproductive roles. A story of one ex-convict reads as, *“I could not attend any training when I was in prison, since I needed to take care of my baby. It is almost impossible to take trainings if you have a baby. I was informed that an inmate with a child can’t attend a class as that disturbs classmates (IDI, female ex-convicts, age 23).*

4.1.2.3. Medical Services

Prisons are supposed to provide medical services for their detainees. Key informants reported that Kaliti prison provides medical services for its detainees. A key informant stated, *“The prison provides medical services when inmates are sick “(KII, a female prison ward).* However, a few female ex-convicts reported the opposite. For instance, one of the female ex-convicts reported, *“I haven’t received any medical treatment during my stay in Kaliti prison. Once I was having a leg problem. And I wanted to have a medical treatment. They only gave me a pain killer and didn’t give me any diagnosis, or they didn’t refer me to a hospital. It is not easy to get referral to hospitals from prison.*

Another study participant noted, *“In prison, inmate’s medical checkup is needed. There are sick people by different chronic disease such as HIV and hypertensives so they need supervision and the prison should supports them by for example if inmates can get milk with their own money, it is better if the sick person is separated from the healthy prisoner. There is a possibility for HIV transmission. (IDI, female ex-convict Age 45).*

The Ethiopia prison regulation stated that inmates shall be provided with a medical treatment free of charge and to the extent of that circumstance allow every prison shall have a medical facility, adequate medical equipment. In addition to this a medical officer shall recommend the referral of any prisoner to another medical institution in accordance with a recommendation of the medical officer (Federal Negarit Gazeta No.47 1^s June 2007: p3710)

The justice for all prison fellowship report stated that sick inmates who require specialist treatment shall be transferred to specialized institutions or to government hospitals. Where hospital facilities are provided in an institution, their equipment, furnishings and pharmaceutical supplies shall be proper for the medical care and treatment of sick inmates, and there shall be a staff of suitable trained officers (JFO June 2012).

On the contrary, a few female ex-offenders reported that they had received a medical service during their imprisonment. One female said, *“I was pregnant when I came to the prison. When my labor began, I went to the prison clinic; the doctors gave me the necessary treatment. I was referred to Gandhi Hospital to give birth. After delivery, I and my baby also had regular checkup in the prison clinic* IDI female ex-convict age 23).

The key informants admitted that the prison doesn't provide adequate medical services for all inmates due to lack of professionals and financial constraints. For instance, the prison cannot provide transportation services for prisoners who are referred to hospitals on daily basis. Lack of quality medical services could negatively affect inmate's prison experience which upon release may result in physical and psychological problems. This in turn, could affect the reintegration of females into their communities.

4.2 Post Prison Challenges

As discussed in chapter two, different studies found that the ex-convicts could face challenges upon release. These challenges in turn affect ex-convicts attempt to reintegrate and live a peaceful life. In this study, female ex-convicts discussed challenges the psychological, economic, and social challenges they faced upon release.

4.2.1. Psychological Challenges

The female ex-convicts reported that they developed anxiety and depression after they were discharged from prison.

4.2.1.1. Anxiety and Depression

Medical attention is rarely given to health-related issues among ex-convicts even though they are vital. Criminologists mainly focus on health damages suffered by crime victims, including physical harm and long-term psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, or post-traumatic stress disorder. Inmates also suffer from mental health problems that are risk factors leading to recidivism and put social integration process in danger after release from prison. Institutional neglect of health issues resulting in social marginalization of inmates increases the risk of their re-entry to prison Pekala-Wojciechowska et al. (2021).

Some of the anxieties the female ex-convicts faced were related to events and incidents that happened when they were in prison. Two ex-convicts lost their loved ones when they were serving time in prison. One example includes, *“When I was in prison my mom was very sick and I lost her when I was in prison. After I was released, I was very depressed and developed anxiety. If I was around, I could have taken care of her* (IDI, female ex-convict, age 37). The story of

another female ex-convict reads as *“My husband died when I was in prison. I could not burry him. My baby and husband used to live together, and my baby moved to my father. My kid suffered a lot as he had lost both of us. This was very anxious for me* (IDI, female ex-convict, age 37). These inmates regretted their imprisonment and blamed themselves for losing their loved ones as they thought; they could have done something if they were around. This feel created anxiety among some ex-convicts.

Some of the inmates developed anxiety following their unpleasant experience in prison. One participant said, *“I was not mentally well and stable after being released from Kaliti prison. Prison was a place where I saw many things, including same sex relationships. And the fear of being attacked by others destroyed my mind and prevented me from reintegrating with my family and friends* (IDI female ex-convict age 37).

Thus, the female ex-convicts faced these psychological challenges due to events happened to their family members when they were in prison. On top of this, prison itself can be traumatic. A recent study showed that unlike men, women in prison are characterized traumatic experience and poor mental health (Edwards et al. 2022). The prison programs could not help inmates to effectively deal with traumatic experiences and this led to the development of anxiety among ex-convicts. Due to this, some found difficult to reintegrate into their community.

4.2.2. Economic Challenges

In terms of the economic aspect, the successful reintegration of ex-inmates depends on getting a suitable job. People are less likely to be employed after being imprisoned. This is due to the stigmatizing consequences of imprisonment (Yin, Boating et al 2022). The study found that

almost all participants faced economic problems after they were discharged from Kaliti prison. These included lack of shelter, lack of job opportunity and financial constraints.

4.2.2.1. Housing Challenges

A few of the female ex-convicts have faced a problem of finding shelter upon release. These females used to live with their relatives; and upon release, their relatives were not willing to shelter them as they perceived the females as criminals. Some also struggled to find a place to stay in although they were able to find friends who could shelter them during the first few days after they got out of prison. In line with this, one participant said, *“After I completed my imprisonment, I went to my friends’ place and stayed with them for three days. They did not treat me as a friend, but they looked down on me and they thought that I would be burden to them. Thus, I could not stay with them any longer and started looking for a job (IDI AGE 18).*

In addition, one participant, who used to serve as a domestic worker, gave birth to a child in prison and she could find an employer after she was released as employers did not want to take her with her daughter. She narrated her story as follows: *My family is from Gondar and when I was released from prison, I had no place to go. I spent one day at the house of a female police officer who knew me in prison. Then I started to live on the street. If I had relatives, I would have gone to them. If I had enough money, I would have gone to my hometown. To feed myself and my baby, started washing clothes for people (IDI, female ex-convicts, age 23).*

The fact that female ex-convicts faced housing problems is also well noted by prior studies. For instance, Kerley (2013) revealed that female ex-offenders found it difficult to find families or relatives to stay with upon release. Similarly, argued that the reintegration of female ex-convicts is challenged by lack of shelter after imprisonment (Muthee, Adeli and Barasa, 2020).

These females partly suffered from this problem as Kaliti prison failed to fulfil its obligation. The Ethiopian Federal Prisoners Treatment Regulation states that “*Where, through investigation, it is ascertained that a prisoner, at the time of release, has no money. The prison shall provide him with clothes and money to cover his transportation and subsistence costs to travel to his former residence*” (Treatment of Federal Prisoners Council of Ministers Regulation 138/2007, 49/2). However, the female ex-convicts reported that they haven’t received any financial help from the prison.

4.2.2.2. Lack of Job Opportunity

Ex-convicts especially female ex-convicts have various issues that limited their job opportunity such as limited education and cognitive skill, lack of work experience, health related issue (Holzer 2003). Some of the inmates lacked skill and knowable they could sell in the labor market. And they couldn’t improve their knowledge and skills when they were in prison. As a result, they continued to suffer from job opportunities.

However, not all female ex-convicts lack formal education, skills and knowledge, a few of female ex-convicts who took part in this study reported that finding employment after they got out from Kaliti prison was a major challenge although they have formal education and professional skills. These females stated that they were ready to move from their past and looking for a job in line with their educational background. Some of the participants had a job before their conviction and could not rejoin their work after they were released.

In connection with this, one of the participants said, “*I was in prison not because I was convicted, I stated in prison as I was suspected of a crime. When I was declared innocent and released, I went to my previous workplace. Yet, they (bosses) refused to let me work. It was very*

difficult to go back to work as an ex-convict. The organization regulation clearly states that, employers have right to continue to work for the organization if they are not found guilty. But if you are not found guilty, you can go back to work, but they haven't let me resume my job (IDI, a 37 years old female).

Thus, some females were unable to find a job not because they lack knowledge or skills, or motivation. It appears that some of the ex-convicts could not find a job as their criminal background prevented them from getting jobs. Canotra (2015) stated that ex-offenders may struggle to find suitable jobs due to their criminal backgrounds. Some employers may consider ex-offenders as dangerous and unproductive individuals that adversely affect their organization (Lutman, Lynch, and Monk-Turner, 2015). Thus, it should be noted that the females' ex-offenders attempt to reintegrate into their communities could be challenged by this and any programs that aim to successfully reintegrate ex-convicts should take this challenge into consideration.

On the contrary, few female ex-convicts reported that their prior conviction did not prevent them from getting jobs. One participant said *"I was imprisoned for crime related to tax. This has become common as a few people in my workplace were convicted of the same crime. So, when I was released, I resumed working in the same place without any challenge"* (IDI, female ex-convict, age 37). It appears that committing some crimes that do not attract severe negative reaction from the community, may not very much reduce ex-offender opportunity to find jobs after they were released from prison.

Overall, the fact that ex-convicts' inability to find jobs upon release may negatively affect their reintegration process. Addressing this challenge not only help the females to smoothly reenter

their society but also prevents them from committing crimes again. As suggested by Snoggrass, Jenkins and Tate (2017), ex-convicts who found jobs are less likely to reoffend. Inability to find jobs further affects, ex-convicts' health, confidence and self-esteem (Oliver, 2017).

4.2.2.3. Financial Constraints

Inmates' motivation to commit crimes could be linked to financial reasons. This could continue to be a challenge even after completing prior imprisonment. The study found that financial problems are among the major challenges the female ex-convicts faced after they were released. One female ex-convict said *"After I did my time in prison, I didn't have a penny and, I didn't have any savings. Life has become very difficult. At least when I was in prison, I have something to eat* (IDI, female who was on trial, age 37).

The financial problem of some of the participants of the study is to some extent related to their inability to find jobs after they completed their imprisonment. Thus, some struggled with financial problems. If this continues to be a problem, they may end up reoffending. Thus, interventions should help ex-convict find a job or engage in income generating activities.

To sum up, the study showed that due to economic challenges, female ex-convicts post-prison life may not be easy, and this may affect their reintegration. In line with Marxist theory, the study indicated that economic reasons are crucial factors that shape people's tendency to commit and recommit crime. In addition, these factors can be barriers to the reintegration of female ex-offenders into their community. Marxist theory suggests that females' situation in society can be improved through increasing their access to education, job opportunity etc. (Hossain et al 2016). Thus, there is a need to intervene to improve the economic status of ex-convicts to assist a smooth reintegration and reduce future offending.

4.2.3. Social Challenges

Ex-convicts face some social challenges after they got out of prison. This study has identified lack of support and rejection by family members and labeling were among the social challenges the female ex-offenders faced upon release. Comment The major social challenges the female ex-convicts are provided in the following sub-sections.

4.2.3.1. Lack of Support and Rejection by Family Members and Relatives

Family member's acceptance and support plays an important role in reintegrating ex-offenders into the community. On the contrary, if family members and relatives reject ex-offenders, it will negatively affect the reintegration of the ex-offenders. The study came with a mixed on the acceptance of the female ex-offenders by their family members. While some were welcomed and given care and attention by their family members, some were rejected by their beloved ones. One example includes an ex-offender whose husband has been very supportive. She said, *“My husband (we were not married by then) is very kind to me. When I was in prison, he used to visit me regularly and when I was released, he proposed to me, and we got married after two months. He has been keeping my imprisonment and he did not even tell that to his own family. Although I didn't like that, I know that he did that to protect me from them. He tries to make me feel forget my past (IDI, female ex-offender, age 37).*

On the other hand, some women were either faced rejection by family members and relatives i.e in laws or anticipate their family members would reject them. The following story illustrates how rejection by family member could affect the reintegration of female ex-offenders in to their community. One participant told her story as follows:

My parents were really ashamed of my arrest. I told them I was innocent but that didn't matter to them. What mattered to them was that I was sent to prison. I heard that they used to feel very ashamed to discuss my issue with their neighbors. When I was released, I directly came home, and they were still mad at me. I could see that in their eyes. When neighbors came to congratulate me, I see how they feel and react. They are ashamed of my arrest. They are not helping me at all. I feel like I am a burden. I wish I could get a job as soon as possible and live the house (IDI, female ex-offender, age 19).

In addition, one participant said, her in laws would reject her if they found she was in prison and she was living with this fear during the data collection. She said “*When I was in prison for three months, my husband lied to his family that I went to a rural area....So after I got out of prison, his family came and visit me. They still don't know that I was in prison. But, if they hear about my arrest, they would dissolve my family. I know that they don't want me to be with their son (IDI, female ex-offender age 24).*

As seven of the female ex-offenders were originally from outside of Addis Ababa, family acceptance or rejection did not impact their reintegration. However, it can be understood from the study, family acceptance or rejection could play an important role in female ex-offenders' reentry to their community.

The effect of family acceptance or rejection on the reintegration of ex-offenders is well studied by previous studies. For instance, Brunton-Smith and McCarthy (2017), revealed that strong family bonds and acceptance is essential for the reintegration ex-convicts. Similarly, Bales and Mears (2008) compared ex-offenders who had family support and acceptance with those who did

not have family support and found that ex-convicts who had good family relationships are likely to successfully reintegrate to their communities.

On the contrary, the study findings indicated that female ex-offenders could not gain the trust and support of their family members and relatives upon release. If family members and relatives do not provide support to their family members who were released from prisons, this would create psychological and social impact on the ex-offenders. This again affected the reintegration process. Thus, family members and relatives should be informed about the impact of their acceptance or rejection on female ex-offenders' life.

4.2.3.2. Labeling

Labeling theory posits that ex-offenders are likely to experience labeling and stigma by community members. After they are released from prison, individuals could be labeled as deviants and criminals irrespective of their progress in altering their criminal behavior (Brown et al. 2010). This labeling affects the personal identity of ex-offenders and negatively affects their relationship with other members of society (Macionis and Plummer, 2007).

In line with the assumptions of labeling theory, some of the study participants were labeled by their family, neighborhood and previous colleagues. These informants reported that the labeling has affected their self-confidence and made their interaction with others very difficult. The labeling experience is even worse in female ex-offenders as committing crime for females is highly condemned by the society (Kibur, 2013). One of the study participants shared her experience as follows:

After I was released from Kaliti prison, I didn't have a place to stay at then my friend has allowed me to stay with her. But I don't like the way she is treating me. She has a small business, and she sells food and drink. I am helping her by cleaning the house and washing dishes, but she treats me not only as a maid and she wants me to dress like a commercial sex worker to attract her customers. She sometimes reminds me that I was in prison, and she hides her money thinking that I could steal it (IDI, female ex-convict age 23)

Another participant reported also shared her experience with labeling. She said, *"I am still adopting my new situation. I had stayed quite some time in prison, and I am now trying to settle. But, I don't like what I see from my some of my neighbors. They were good to me before I was imprisoned. Some of them are just talking behind my back. I heard one of them saying I was supposed to stay in prison for long but got out soon because I paid money to the police (IDI, female ex-convict, age, 29.)"*

The labeling is likely to impact the female ex-convicts psychologically. Some of them could develop low self-confidence due to the bad names given to them by their friends and neighbors. In fact, the impact of the labeling could go beyond psychological impacts. The study was conducted in the first month after the female ex-convicts were released. Had it been conducted after some months, it could have been possible to document various impact of the labeling. The psychological and other impacts of labeling are also documented by previous studies. Studies showed that that society's negative reaction and labeling to ex-offenders could contribute to increased rate to recidivism in developing countries (Quinn-Hogan, 2021; Moore et al. 2016). A study conducted in Ethiopia also showed that labeling and stigma forced ex-convicts to recidivate (Kibur, 2013). In addition, some studies revealed that labeling and stigmatization of

ex-convicts negatively affects the successful integration of ex-offenders back into their communities (Moore et al. 2016; Harding, 2003).

As discussed, the fact that female ex-convicts could be labeled and stigmatized by others could have serious impact on their reintegration. NGOs and other interventions implementers should provide public education for the wider society to make sure that female ex-convicts are smoothly reintegrated back to their community. Female ex-offenders shall also be given counseling service how they could stand labeling and stigma by others.

4.3. Coping Mechanism and Strategies of Reintegration

Coping mechanism refers to the actions individuals take to manage their situation and problems (LaCourse et al. 2018). The study assessed the coping mechanisms and strategies female ex-convicts employed to deal with post prison challenges and reintegrate to their communities.

As discussed in the previous sections, the female ex-convicts faced a number of physiological, economic, and social challenges after they got out of prison. Proving for what the females did to cope with the challenges; the study documented the major coping strategies. Documenting these could be imperative to identify best ways of reintegrating to society.

4.3.1. Religion as Coping Mechanism

Religion has played crucial role in reducing the physiological challenges the female ex-offenders face and helping them reintegrate into society. This is in line with prior studies who reported that religion provides support for ex-offenders to assist them reintegration into their communities (Bosi, 2021; Irfna, 2022). One of the female ex-offenders said “I sometimes feel very sad after I was released from prison. Whenever I feel depressed, I go to church and cry. I

share my feeling to Saint Mary, and I feel better” (IDI, female ex-convict, age 28). Another participant said, “Whenever I feel depressed, I go to church and tell Jesus about my problems. Had I not gone to church, I would have suffered a lot (IDI, female ex-offender, age 20). After I released from Kaliti prison I was depressed, I go to mosque and read Qur’an this help me to feel better (IDI, female ex-convicts, age37).

In this study, religious communities such as churches and mosques have not provided any tangible and intangible support for the female ex-offenders. The females used the religious teachings and setting to cope with their depression. However, religious organizations could play a role in helping ex-offenders to resettle in their communities. A recent study in the UK (Irfan, 2022) showed that religious institutions can provide tangible support such as helping with housing and employment. As shown in the previous section economic challenges are among the key concerns for the female ex-convicts. Irfan (2022) also argued that religious institutions can provide intangible support such as helping ex-convicts to establish strong bond within their communities to cope with the stigma and related challenges they face upon release. A study conducted in Kenya (Harries, 2015) showed that religious organization helped ex-convicts to reintegrate into their communities by providing them financial aids, sewing machines, sanitary requirements. Thus, religious institutions should understand the specific needs of ex-offenders and come up with a strategy to help their members to reintegrate into the society.

4.3.2. Concealing Criminal Background

As discussed under section 2.2.3., one of the strategy ex-offenders use to escape from stigma and labeling is concealing the fact that they were in prison (Muthee, 2020). This study also found that some female ex-convicts concealed their criminal background to maintain their reputation and

avoid social condemnation. One participant remarked *“No one knew that I was arrested. I did not tell anyone it's very embarrassing. My family didn't know that I was in prison; expect my mom. If you tell others that you were in prison, they will insult you tomorrow. I didn't want my children suffer from this. My mother told my kids that I had gone to work another town (IDI, female ex-offender, age 37).*

A prior study in Ethiopia also found that female ex-offenders hide their background and used lying as coping mechanism mainly due to the community perception towards female offenders (Kibur, 2013). This study argued that Ethiopians seem to have little room for female criminals and therefore label female criminals as dangerous and reacted bitterly to them when they got out of prison.

Evans and Cubellis (2015) wrote that stigmatization is an unavoidable consequence of a criminal conviction. As a result, it may come as little surprise that the females used concealment of their criminal background as a strategy to escape from labeling and stigmatization. Changing the attitude of the wider community about female ex-convicts could help women to better cope with the social and economic challenges.

4.3.3. Changing Resident Area and Migration

Individuals with criminal records could be victims of labeling and discrimination. This is regardless of the possible behavioral changes they show after completing their term of imprisonments. To escape from labeling and discrimination, two of the female ex-convicts changed their resident areas after they were released from Kaliti prison. One example includes, *“I used to live in Addis Ketema sub city around St. Amanuel church before my arrest. After I got out, I found it difficult to live with my family and friends. They considered me as a criminal and I*

could not stand their bad attitude. But my friends and my cousins had good faith in me, and I am now living with my cousins around Bisrate Gabriel neighborhood (IDI age 37 married).

A recent study conducted in Kenya also showed that to avoid any labeling by their communities, female ex-offenders relocated to new areas where they are not known by others (Muthee, 2020). The fact that female ex-convicts could be forced to change their resident areas after they are released from prison shows the severity of stigma and discrimination they face. It is evident that not all females can afford to change their residents and cope with the stigma. Unless the public attitudes towards ex-offenders change, female ex-offenders will continue to suffer and struggle to successfully reintegrate to their communities. This in turn could create strain among female ex-offenders. As Agnew (2001) noted, due to the strain they feel, offenders experience anger and may ultimately engage in criminal behavior.

In a nutshell, this study has shown that although the female ex-convicts face many challenges upon leaving Kaliti prison, they had a few coping mechanisms to rely on. Any attempt to improve the reintegration of ex-offenders should take this fact into consideration and design a strategy to help female ex-offenders cope with their challenges. Prior studies have shown that ex-convicts rely on family networks and non-government agencies for support in getting housing, employment and financial aids in South Africa (Larner, 2017) and Kenya (Harris, 2015). As it stands, it appears that the ex-convicts have not been supported and this could impact their attempt to readopt in their communities. This could also force them to reoffend.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

5.1. Conclusion

This chapter summarizes the major findings of study and provides conclusions and recommendation based on the findings. The main goal of this study was to explore the reintegration of female ex-convicts to the community. In this study the researcher set out the following specific objectives: Exploring rehabilitation programs and supports Kaliti Prison Administration has put in place to facilitate the reintegration of female ex-convicts before their release, examining the challenges female ex-convicts upon their release from Kaliti prison and assessing the coping mechanisms, the female ex-convicts employ to deal with the challenges they face upon release and their strategy to reintegrate into their community.

As little research has been conducted in this area, the study has employed qualitative research method to explore the reintegration process and its challenges. The study made use of both secondary and primary data sources. Secondary data such as prison regulation, articles and books were reviewed to answer the research questions. Primary data were collected from eleven female ex-convicts discharged from kaliti prison through in-depth interview methods. Key informant interviews were conducted with two prison officers (psychologist and prison ward) and one NGO staff. The major findings of the study and its implication are presented in this chapter.

The study noted that Kaliti prison put in place rehabilitation programs to deter inmate's criminality. Guided by Ethiopian Prison regulation, Kaliti prison attempts to improve the overall behavior of offenders through various rehabilitation programs and supports. According to the

finding of this study, Kaliti rehabilitation program has achieved some promising results in helping female convicts through its' various programs. The prison reintegration programs include social services, counseling, sport and recreation activities and awareness creation on law and ethical education for inmates. However, not all female ex-convicts had got opportunity to attend all the programs when they were in prison. The prison lacks financial and personal resources to provide the rehabilitation and reintegration programs for all inmates.

On top of this, the prison doesn't provide its rehabilitation programs in a way that takes the special and unique needs of female inmates into consideration. For instance, breast feeding, and pregnant women do not participate in the prison education programs. Beside this, some of the female ex-offenders received medical services while they were in Kaliti prison. Although, it is encouraging to learn that the prison is implementing rehabilitation programs to create law abiding citizens, the programs should be provided to all inmates and the prison should give emphasize to the unique needs of female inmates. Females experience in prison could influence how they would reintegrate to their communities.

The study reveals female ex-convicts' post release challenges. The female ex-convicts faced psychological, economic and social challenges after released and returned to the community. Most of the female ex-convicts had anxiety and depression. These feelings were the result of incidents that happened when they were in prison and the negative treatment they received from community members upon release. In addition, some faced stigma by their families and friends.

Most of the study participant faced economic challenges including findings housing, luck of job opportunity and financial constraints. Some of female ex-convicts also faced social challenges such as rejection by family members and lack of support from people around them. This is inline

the theoretical assumption of labeling theory that states that ex-inmates are given names and stigmatized by other community members which results in social and economic exclusion. As prior studies have shown, the labeling and stigma of female ex-convicts is worse than the stigma of male ex-convicts. As a result, it is expected that the challenges female ex-convicts face upon prison discharge could be more difficult. Due to this, female could develop low self-esteem and negative attitude towards their community. This could negatively affect the reentry of female ex-convicts into their community and may encourage reoffending.

The study documented female ex-convicts' coping mechanism for the challenges they faced during their reintegration time. Some of the study participant used religion as a coping mechanism to deal with their psychological problem. In addition to this the study also found that some female ex-convicts concealed their criminal background to maintain their reputation and avoid social stigma. Moreover, some of them used changing resident area as coping mechanism.

The study had some limitations such as relying on only 11 female ex-convicts. This study explored the reintegration of female ex-convicts relying on only 11 inmates. Conducting this study was not easy as inmates were not willing to take part in the study. Females do not feel free to talk to researchers about their criminal background. The number of participants that involved in the study was not based on data saturation but the availability of respondents. As a result, the study was limited to a few female ex-convicts. Conducting more in-depth interviews with ex-convicts who were released before a couple of months could have produced more and diversified findings about social and economic challenge. Moreover, as the study did not include male offenders, it wasn't possible to compare and contrast the difference between the two gender regarding post-prison challenges. However, the research cited prior studies to indicate the unique challenges of female ex-convicts. Future, studies may conduct mix method studies to increase

our understanding of the most significant and prevalent challenges by conducting comparative studies. This kind of studies would better inform policies and intervention. Thus, more studies should be conducted in future on the reintegration of female ex-convicts to suggest strategies of effective reintegration methods.

5.2. Recommendation

Based on the findings of the study, the study recommends the following to improve the reintegration of female ex-convicts to their communities.

- 1. Increasing the financial and personal capacity of Kaliti Prison could improve rehabilitation programs in terms of outreach and content:** The rehabilitation program does not include reintegration trainings. The study showed that prison programs could play important role in facilitating the reintegration of female ex-convicts. Thus, reintegration trainings should be given for female ex-convicts. To this end, the prison should strengthen its financial and personal capacity. With the current resources, it will be difficult to provide reintegration services.
- 2. Design gender sensitive rehabilitation and reintegration programs.** The prison programs should outreach all inmates and should be gender sensitive to accommodate the needs of females. Providing gender aware rehabilitation programs not only deter the criminal behavior of inmates but also improve the lives of inmates. The programs should be aware of the unique challenges female face when they are released. Thus, the prison should design and implement a tailored program to help female ex-convicts to successfully reintegrate to the community.

3. **Government, religious and non-government organization design and implement interventions to assist efforts of female ex-convicts' reintegration.** Although the female ex-convicts face several challenges upon their release, they were primarily left for themselves to cope with their challenges. There is no attempt by religious organization, non-government organizations and the government to help female ex-convicts to reintegrate to their community. Intervention is needed to improve the self-esteem of ex-convicts and improve their skills to improve their chance of getting jobs. Intervention implementers and religious institutions should learn from experiences of other African countries and provide some tangible and intangible support to help female ex-offenders.
4. **Awareness creation activities.** The study noted that the general public may have negative attitudes towards female ex-convicts that affected the successful reentry of female ex-convicts to the community. Community's awareness should be raised to reduce stigmatizing attitudes toward ex-convicts. This needs a collaborative effort of the media, government, community organizations and NGOs to create awareness and reduce negative attitudes.

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Annex

A. In-depth interview guide

Consent form

Hello, my name is Betelhem Adugna. I am graduate student at the center for Gender Studies at Addis Ababa University. Currently, I am conducting research on the reintegration of female ex-convicts to the community: the case of female ex-convicts discharged from kaliti prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I would very much appreciate your participation in the study. Your information is very relevant for the success of this study. Whatever answer you provide would be kept strictly confidential so I require you to respond to the questions freely. You have the right to ask any question that is not clear or which you feel uncomfortable at any time. You have the right to withdraw when you feel so uncomfortable. The interview will take forty five minutes on average. Participating in the study is completely voluntary. Are you willing to take part in this interview?

Respondent:

Informant code -----

Signature -----

Date -----

Researcher

Name-----

Signature -----

Date-----

Identification of female ex-convicts

- I. Informant code
- II. How old are you?
- III. Where were you born?
- IV. What is your marital status?
- V. What is your highest educational achievement?

VI. What were you doing before imprisonment (did you have a job? If yes what was your job)

VII. Length of prison stay

1. Tell me about your living and working condition (Where do you live now? With whom you are living now? How are you making a living?)
2. Tell me about your family?
3. What was the main reason for your imprisonment (if you are not willing to tell me about your past life experience you can skip this question).
4. For how long had you stayed in Kaliti prison?
5. During your stay, have you taken any educational training or counseling support? (If so, tell me about it, did you attend the training/service regularly? what benefits did you obtain from the programs?)
6. How was the reaction of your family, friends and neighbors after you were released from prison? (Did you face any problem in your interaction with them?)
7. What economic challenges have you faced after you were released form kaliti prison?
8. What psychological challenges have you faced after you were released from kaliti prison?
9. How did you deal with those challenges?
10. What is your future plan? Do you think that your status as ex-convict will affect your future aspiration?
11. Have you received any support from governmental or non-governmental organization after you were released form Kaliti prison?
12. I have finished my questions, but if you would tell me any additional information, I would be happy to hear.

Thank you for your participation

B. Key informant interview guide for prison administration officer

Hello, my name is Betelhem Adugna. I am graduate student at Addis Ababa University center for Gender studies. Currently, I am conducting research on the reintegration of female ex-convicts to the community: the case of female ex-convicts discharged from Kaliti prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I would very much appreciate your participation in the study. The research is qualitative; therefore, its validity is highly dependent on the genuineness of the information given by informants. I hereby request you to respond to the following questions openly and honestly so that the intended goal of the research could be achieved.

I. Name

II. Year of service

III. Educational level

IV. Position

1. What regulations are put in place to treat and rehabilitate offenders in prison?
2. How do you think the Prison Administration is translating these regulations into practices?
3. How do you keep inmates? Do you classify them on the basis of security and program needs?
4. What are the various interventions of the Prison Administration to rehabilitate the offenders? Are there any programs that help inmates reintegrate to their community after they are released from the prison? Do you have specific programs for female inmates? If so, please give me details about the program? What is the program component, who implements the programs? Do the staff receive gender specific trainings What does the staff composition and expertise look like?)

5. In your opinion, what have been the major successes of the rehabilitation programs?
6. What have been the challenges Kaliti prison rehabilitation program faced?
7. What are the stakeholders that prison administration work with enhance prison programs?
8. Does the rehabilitation program help inmates after they are released from prison?
9. What does the prison need to improve its programs for female offenders?
10. In your opinion what needs to be done to successfully reintegrate female ex-convicts to the community?
11. I have finished my questions, but if you would tell me any additional information, I would be happy to hear.

Thank you

**C. Key informant interview guide for prison rehabilitation center social worker/
psychologists**

Hello, my name is Betelhem Adugna. I am graduate student at Addis Ababa University center for Gender studies. Currently, I am conducting research on the reintegration of female ex-convicts to the community: the case of female ex-convicts discharged from kaliti prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I would very much appreciate your participation in the study. The research is qualitative; therefore, its validity is highly dependent on the genuineness of the information given by informants. I hereby request you to respond to the following questions openly and honestly so that the intended goal of the research could be achieved.

I. Name

II. Educational level

III. Position

IV. Year of service

1. What rehabilitation programs are put in place for female inmates? In your opinion, what are the needs and priorities of female inmates?
2. In your opinion, how do the rehabilitation programs help to rehabilitate female inmates? What are the major challenges in implementing the programs?
3. Would you please share me your opinion about the challenges female inmates face after they complete their term of imprisonment?
4. Do you think that the rehabilitation program helps female ex-convicts to reintegrate with their community after they are released?
5. What does the rehabilitate program need to improve its service, particularly related to female offenders?

6. What should be done to successfully reintegrate female ex-convicts to their community?
By whom? Who are the stakeholders?

7. I have finished my questions, but if you would tell me any additional information, I would be happy to hear.

Thank you.

D. Key informant interview guide for non-governmental organization staff

Hello, my name is Betelhem Adugna. I am graduate student at Addis Ababa University center for Gender studies. Currently, I am conducting research on the reintegration of female ex-convicts to the community: the case of female ex-convicts discharged from kaliti prison in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. I would very much appreciate your participation in the study. The research is qualitative; therefore, its validity is highly dependent on the genuineness of the information given by informants. I hereby request you to respond to the following questions openly and honestly so that the intended goal of the research could be achieved.

I. Name

II. Educational level

III. Position

IV. Year of service

1. Tell me about your organization? Which categories of people do you primarily consider as your beneficiaries?
2. What are the major programs and strategies you implement to support convicts/ex-convicts? How do you recruit beneficiaries?
3. What have been the successes and challenges of the program?

4. In your opinion, what should be done to reintegrate female ex-convicts to their communities?
5. I have finished my questions, but if you would tell me any additional information, I would be happy to hear.

Thank you