

ABSTRACT

The comparative rate of women entering the formal correctional system and serving custodial sentences, both in prison and prison remand awaiting trial, is on the increase. This is accompanied by a similarly increasing number of women eventually exiting prisons annually. This study investigated the challenges influencing reentry of women ex-offenders in Nyeri County, Kenya. The study specifically investigated the effects of not addressing the challenges identified for women returning from prison in Nyeri County especially challenges connected to housing, employment, relationships, drug, and substance abuse as well as mental health after incarceration. This was a qualitative study adopting a phenomenological design. The site and respondents were purposively selected with snowballing being used to select the respondents to the point of saturation. This study made use of 41 women ex-convicts, 3 FGDs, and 9 key informants. Data were collected by use of semi-structured interview schedules. Results indicated that ex-offenders face various challenges upon release from prison. The effects of these challenges when not addressed the impact the individual self, their family, the community, and predisposed the ex-convicts to a high propensity for recidivism. Based on the findings it is suggested that the use of community corrections, adjusting prison training to market needs, and the use of victim-offender mediation can be better alternatives to incarceration.