



## **Nutthanuch Mekara**

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Your Excellency, distinguished guests, ladies, and gentlemen. I am deeply honoured to be selected to accept ‘the 2017 Educational Awards for Excellence’ in the category of law. As far as I know, it was very difficult for the academic panel to choose the winners due to the high calibre of the candidates, I feel humble but at the same time extremely proud.

First and foremost, I would like to express my deep gratitude to the Kamlangjai Project under the Royal Initiative of Her Royal Highness Princess Bajarakitiyabha for allowing me the priceless opportunity to do research on women prisoners a few years ago. Secondly, I am grateful to the Anglo-Thai Society for launch a scheme of Educational Awards for Excellence, including No 5 Chambers and the academic judging panel for acknowledgement the excellence of Thai PhD students doing research in the UK. Thirdly, I am indebted to Udon Thani Rajabhat University for sponsor towards my PhD study. I also would like to express my very great appreciation to Prof Peter Duff and Dr Ilona Cairns for their invaluable supervision on my thesis during these years. Their willingness to give their time so generously has been very much appreciated. My grateful thanks are also extended to Police Lieutenant Jittima Kumthornwiwat and Tanatthep Tianprasit for their professional guidance and valuable support. And lastly, my exclusive thanks are extended to Asst Prof Dr Warachit Phayom for her encouragement throughout difficult time.

With respect to the previous research, it consequently contributed me to the finding of uninformed issues regarding drug offences committed by women. Approximately 80 percent of women offenders in Thai women’s prisons are convicted of drug offences which are internationally regarded as non-violent offence. My PhD research concerns Thai drug laws on the basis of criminalisation which contain too severe punishment have fuelled a dramatic expansion of prison population. And this leads to a criminal justice system where minor drug-related offenders receive tougher penalties than murderers. Building more prisons can never be a sustainable solution as they will be sooner filled up again unceasingly. My PhD research attempts to suggest ways forward for Thailand in preventing sending defendants and offenders of drug offences; particularly women into prisons, rather than reducing the numbers of them. The research also proposes alternative measures to Thailand not only to reduce the numbers of women incarcerated in prisons but also help reducing massive drug-related cases filed to the court. This helps Thailand reduce national budgets spent on criminal justice system particularly on Department of Corrections.

Thank you very much.