

Drug Offense Recidivism among Female Inmates

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate drug offense recidivism among female inmates for which data were collected from in-depth interviews with 18 female inmates of Nakhon Si Thammarat Central Prison, and informal interviews with prison officers or warders. Logical context description was employed to analyze content by comparing theoretical concepts with other related studies.

The findings of the study revealed that the recidivism among female inmates would never end if they still had arduous living conditions with burdens of raising children without help from relatives. Most of them were not well educated and were easily cheated by males who were their boyfriends or husbands. It could be because they wanted love, good future, good family, and a lot of money, so they inevitably chose to commit offenses either with or without intention. Most of the female inmates did not learn their lesson if the penalties were not severe. Some of them were granted a royal pardon, which was deemed the best thing that could happen in the life of any inmate, however, they were not afraid of reoffending-even though whilst in prison they intended not to have anything to do with drugs again. Nevertheless, when they returned to the same environments, their way of life and people around them made them repeat their offenses. The results of this study would be useful for related individuals and organizations in forming policy and designating preventive measures, and solving the problem of recidivism so that inmates would become good people and would not repeat the offenses.

Keywords: recidivism, drug offense, female inmates

1. Introduction

The problem of recidivism in Thai society has not yet been solved. It is very surprising to see that people who have been incarcerated are not afraid to reoffend. In the age of globalization when society values materialism, people are more wicked, and look up to the rich while they look down on the poor and grassroots people. Thailand is one of top countries in the world in terms of numbers of female inmates. According to the International Center for Prison Studies, 2011, when compared with other countries, Thailand was the 4th of the world with 29,175 female inmates out of the total prison population of 224,292 inmates (Wamsley, 2011). In the past, Thai women were followers in the family and played minor roles in society; however, presently, they play more important roles as a result of economic development that makes it necessary for more women to work outside the home in order to support the family. The man who is the household leader, working alone cannot earn enough to support the family adequately. When more women work outside the home, and the cost of living has become higher, some low-educated women are forced by their situation to commit offenses to support their existence. For example, they become drug agents or smugglers because they think that these are easy ways to make money rapidly without thinking of the consequences of what they do, especially, in that it can cause more social problems (Narumittayarn, 2003).

When women commit offenses and are brought to the justice process from the beginning when they are questioned by the police until they are sentenced to prison, their term ends, and they are released back to society. The losses and collapses of the family not only affect the women themselves but also their dependents. In particular, their children have to face with misfortune, have no one to look after and train them, lack family love and warmth, forego education, and eventually become problematic people that are a burden for society to cope with. These should be enough reminders for women in general not to commit any more offenses because serving time in prison means they are cut off from their families and the society that they love and are attached to. People must obey rules, regulations and laws; if not, they are punished. Whenever people commit an offense,

they have to accept the negative impact on their families, and that leads to social problems. This is a loss of valuable resources. In addition, social security decreases while the number of offenses increases and it is an obstacle to development of the country (Maneenit, 2000). The problem of offenses committed by women has increasingly been increased as can be observed from news presented by different media such as television, radio, newspaper, and the Internet. When offenses are found, women are usually involved in them. There are more cases that are caused by women such as offenses against properties, offenses against life, offenses against the person, sexual offenses, in cases such as drug cases.

Drug prevalence has increasingly become more violent. News and information about arresting people committing drug offenses, whether they are producers, traffickers or users can be continually observed through mass media even though all related parties are seriously campaigning against them or preventing them for the country's stability and future. As Thai social conditions and way of life have changed, so have drug problems. There are more drug addicts even though it is difficult to determine the actual number; however, the number can be statistically estimated. The number of drug addicts can apparently be determined from the number of drug addicts who voluntarily obtain treatment in drug addiction centers. Before treatment, they have used heroin, opium, inhalants, marijuana, and amphetamines. What is most worrying is that all types of drugs have spread to people in all areas in Bangkok as well as other provinces (Inthichai, 2009). The problem that has long been faced by Thailand is drug problems in terms of being a drug trafficking area, drug prevalence, a drug trafficking route for opium, heroin, marijuana, amphetamine, inhalants, cocaine, ecstasy pills, and some other addictive substances. Thus, drug problems are problems severely undermine humans or human capital which is a national capital (Chunhasopak, 2008).

The repeat offending by female inmates is a problem that has not been adequately solved by related personnel and organizations. Even organizations like prisons with high security and good facilities and control system where prominent criminals are imprisoned have not been able to solve the problem. Studies have found that recidivism takes place due to insufficient income to support the family, and failure in school as a result of a lack of perseverance, a broken family, the loose relationship between family members, living in an uncaring society, a lack of ability to say no, and being self-centered (Promnil, 2002). Inmate records show that most offenders have previously been imprisoned which prompts the question "Why do people who have been imprisoned commit offenses again after being released?" (Janjaru, 2008). Even though drug traffickers are suppressed and severely punished in order to restrict the opportunities for them from reoffending, to deter others repetition, and to provide opportunities for offenders to improve their behavior, there are often pieces of news repetition about drug trading among inmates. This even happens in prisons with high security where high-profile inmates are imprisoned. As can be seen, measures in prevention and suppression drug trafficking, and severe punishments cannot stop criminals from committing crimes, especially those important traffickers who know very well that if arrested, they will be severely punished and still dare to do it again thinking that there is little chance of them being arrested (Inthichai, 2009).

Thus, the researcher became interested in conducting a study on drug offense recidivism among female inmates, in particular, those female inmates of Nakhon Si Thammarat Central Prison so that all related parties could use the findings in preventing the behavior of reoffending among female inmates, and providing help for them. Moreover, the findings would help society understand inmates and give them more opportunities to return to society before the problem escalates and is more difficult to solve.

2. Literature Review

From reviewing concepts, theories, and research reports related to recidivism, there are many causes for repeat offenses but some of the most important causes are social environments, personality and psychological condition of inmates. That is to say after offenders are arrested and punished, their second offense and subsequent offenses can be considered habits that are difficult to break. Hence, crimes increase even though these offenders have been through a process of socialization and a correctional process in the justice procedure (Mukura, 2011). Habitual criminals cannot conduct themselves according to social standards and cannot be made afraid of doing it again. They commit offenses whenever they have a chance without taking into account the consequences. They make their living by committing offenses and never think of stop doing it. After being punished, they do it again; they are happy to live this way with evils in their personality, and they are called habitual criminals or criminals who repeat criminal acts without being afraid of doing it again. These types of criminals are physically and mentally normal at first; they do not show abnormality or wickedness even when other members of their families are traced back, still they show no abnormalities. Nothing wrong was found during their school life. However, their physical and mental defects or disorders appear later in life that prompt them to become criminals. This may be because they are gradually forced by certain needs or situations to commit offenses, and when they do it

repeatedly, they are used to doing it. This is when their personality change takes place and they become hardened criminals (Jaiklongkleaw, 2003). Some criminals of this type come from good and well-educated families but befriend bad people, and it is possible that their lavishness forces them to seek more money. After committing offenses repeatedly, they become skilled. Generally, these types of criminals are alcoholics and drug addicts which is the reason why punishments are not effective; evil is deep-rooted in their personality (Inthichai, 2009).

3. Methods

3.1 Key Informants

Nakhon Si Thammarat Central Prison, in particular, the zone for female inmates was selected for the study because over the last 15 years the number of female inmates has shown a rapid increase in numbers (Jitsawang, 2001, 2012). Female inmates who were repeat drug offenders were the target group of key informants of the study.

3.2 Data Collection Methods

The data for this qualitative study were collected by conducting in-depth interviews with 18 female inmates who repeatedly committed drug offenses who were selected by prison officers and warders. The prison officers and warders were informally interviewed. The inmates were selected based on the type of their repeat offenses. Then the data collected from these representatives were tested for validity using a triangulation technique through different time, methods and places.

3.3 Data Analysis

Data were initially classified according to the objectives. Logical context description and comparing theoretical concepts with relevant research were used to analyze the contents.

4. Results

4.1 Case Studies of Female Inmates Who Repeatedly Committed Drug Offenses

Case Study 1: Miss Wannasiri (a made-up name)

Miss Wannasiri, a 30-year old woman who was arrested for the second time on charges of drug consumption and possession for sale, and for selling amphetamine tablets. The charges were the same as those brought the first time she was arrested, and sentenced to 3-year-and-4-month imprisonment. For the second offence, she was sentenced to 2-years-and-3 month imprisonment. Her first offense was committed when she was 18 years old, and was studying in the last part of her last year of high school in Sichon District, Nakhon Si Thammarat Province. It was almost the end of the school year when an older friend who was a school alumna asked her to keep 20 tablets of amphetamine for her. Unfortunately, she was found with the drug, and was arrested as a consequence. She thought that the friend knew that the police were after her and therefore asked her to keep the drug. Miss Wannasiri had never had anything to do with drugs before that and she did not know how to use them. She possessed the drug because she only wanted to help her friend. After she was arrested, her parents bailed her out, and moved her to another school where she finally finished high school. Nevertheless, the case was eventually brought before the Supreme Court. She felt very sad, sorry that she disappointed her parents, stressed, and desperate but she was a well-behaved prisoner who obeyed the prison rules and regulations. She had some friends in the prison and they talked, exchanged their opinions, and gave each other encouragement. Thus, she was hopeful about life. She was released after a royal pardon decreed by H.M. the King on a special occasion. She felt as if she had "a new life" outside the prison and intended to be a good person, keep herself away from drugs, and never have anything to do with drugs again.

In talking about her second offense, she said "I intended to never have anything to do with drugs again but I didn't have enough money. I had been in prison before so I was not afraid of anything much. Even though it was not comfortable but I had three meals a day. The money from selling drugs is very inviting and worth the risk." The second offense was selling 1.5 g. of ice (Methamphetamine) two years after her initial release and during which time she had nothing to do with drugs at all. After being released, she worked in a jewelry shop at the Mall Department Store in Bang Kapi, Bangkok but then had to move back home in Nakhon Si Thammarat because she was allergic to the weather in Bangkok, and in her hometown she had a job in a grocery store. She had a 28-year-old boyfriend and he persuaded her to sell ice (Methamphetamine) with him because they could make a lot of money from doing that. His family members did it and so she had to do it, too. She said "I loved him so much that I wanted to please him and did anything he told me to do because I didn't want him to leave me. We wanted to build our future together." When she was arrested, she was in his house with his mother. The police raided the house because they probably had some clues about the drugs. She was shocked when the police

found the drug. Her boyfriend and his family members denied knowing anything about the drug and put all the blames on her. They told the police that she brought the drug and hid it in their house and they did not know anything about it.

Case Study 2: Phi Chuk or Older sister Chuk (a made-up name)

Phi Chuk was 26 years old whose first offense was possessing drugs for sale and selling drugs, and her second offense was with the same charges. When she committed her first offense, she was with a group of friends who used drugs and she did not know that her friend possessed drugs. She was arrested with that friend. The second offense and arrest happened in the same way as the first one. She was sentenced 3 years and 4 months in prison for the first offense of selling amphetamine. She was released after serving her term in prison. She was arrested for the second time on a charge of selling 10 g. of ice (Methamphetamine) but she said she did not sell it, she used it. I noticed that Phi Chuk wore a brown uniform, not a blue one like other inmates, so I asked her why and she said it was because her case was still being considered. She had already been there for almost 4 months. She had just broken up with her boyfriend when she was arrested and he visited her only twice and then disappeared.

She spent more time with her friends than her parents, and she did not obey her parents, and was overconfident. She said that she learned her lesson from her repeat offenses and would remember it till the day she dies. Phi Chuk said she accepted her mistake and was sorry for disappointing her parents. She blamed herself for being a bad person and making her parents cry, and said that if she could choose, she would not let them feel the pain, and to take responsibility for raising her daughter even though her parents were happy to raise her. She did not want her parents to take the responsibility in raising her daughter because she knew how difficult and tiring it was raising a child. She said she missed Nong Khao Fang, her daughter very much and wanted to give her kisses. She started to cry when talking about her daughter. I sat there beside her and just let her cry so that she would feel better after letting out her emotions. She said she had apologized to her parents when they visited her and they forgave her as they always did. She wanted to kneel and ask for forgiveness from them again when she finished her prison sentence. She wanted to give her daughter hugs. She was not sure she would not commit another offense because she would meet the same group of friends again and she would not be able to change her habit but she would try to keep away from those friends.

Case Study 3: Aunt Mee (a made-up name)

Aunt Mee was 49 years old whose first offense was possessing drugs for sale and distribution. She was arrested at a public park after being lured by police officers. She was arrested again for the second time on the same charges. The first offense was for heroin and she was imprisoned for 2 years and 6 months. The second offense was for 21 tablets of amphetamine and she was sentenced to 2 years and 3 months imprisonment. Aunt Mae was arrested with drugs in her possession while walking home. She was stopped by policemen because she looked suspicious and she panicked and, started to run away, and was shot at her right leg. Aunt Mee was different from other inmates because she limped and had to use crutches and she was good-natured and laughed easily because she accepted and didn't worry about being in prison. Her older sister and husband were also imprisoned in the same prison. Her sister was arrested on the same charges as she was but her husband was on a murder charge. He was a construction contractor, and she said he was a scapegoat because he looked like the murderer, and his family still fought the lawsuit for him. Aunt Mee said that she intended refrain from reoffending because she was afraid of the consequences and she wanted to spend the rest of her life with her family and working honesty. She missed her mother and worried about her. Her mother was taken care of by Aunt Mee's two older sisters. She said she was stressed as a result of spending life in the prison.

Case Study 4: Phi Khaek or Older sister Khaek (a made-up name)

Phi Khaek was 35 years old who was serving her fourth sentence for drug possession for sale and distribution. In each case, the drug in questions was ice (methamphetamine). The first time she was arrested after being lured to sell drug to a police officer, and was sentenced for two years in prison but she was in prison for only one year and eight months after which she was pardoned and released. The second sentence was for two years and three months; the third one was for one year and six months, for which she served her full terms. The fourth sentence was for three years and nine months. She was arrested because she and her boyfriend sold amphetamine. They were lured to sell it to a police officer in Chum Phon Province but the police only caught her because he ran away into the wood but she tripped over and fell down. Her older sister took care of the children for her. She only had a primary education, and before selling drugs she sold clothes at weekend markets. She wanted to sell clothes again when she was released as she had done on her release after the three previous imprisonments. However, after about six months, she began to sell drugs again because she did not earn enough money from selling clothes. She made 500 baht for each sale. She was stressed in prison which continued after her release

because society did not give any second chance to people who had been in prison before like herself. She said she had to do it because of hardships of struggling to make a living that was not only for herself alone, and therefore, she would probably reoffend.

Case Study 5: Mrs. Waew (a made-up name)

Mrs. Waew was 41 years old who committed the same type of offense three times, possessing drugs for sale and distribution. The first offense was the possession of 105 tablets of amphetamine. She was lured by police officers from Surat Thani Province. She was given a three-year sentence but she was lucky to be granted a royal pardon by H.M. the King and she was subsequently released after 1 year and 6 months in prison. The second time was after she met the man who would later become her husband and at the time she did not know how to use drugs but he persuaded her to help him sell drugs. She admitted that it was before the second offense that she tried the drug because she wanted to know what it was like, and because she wanted attention from her husband who did not have much time for her. She was then arrested. No one believed her story about the drug because she carried more than one hundred tablets of the drug with her. The punishment for the second offense was one-year imprisonment and she was in Narathiwat Prison throughout the one-year term. Later her husband was imprisoned in Pattani Prison. Her third offense was when she was arrested with 250 g of ice (Methamphetamine) for which the sentence was 27-year imprisonment, and 4,700 tablets of amphetamine for which the sentence was 33-year-and-4-month imprisonment. Thus, the total sentence was 60 years and 4 months. At the time of the interview, she had been there for only 1 year and 6 months, and she said she would probably die in prison and not see her children again. She felt despondent and hopeless, hurt and had to accept her fate. Sometimes she wanted to commit suicide so that she could escape the physical and mental suffering. However, she said that when she thought of her children she felt a little better with fading hope that would be the last hope of her life. That is being granted a royal pardon by H.M. the King and then she could be a good mother for her children. She would not want to become rich in a short period of time by having anything to do with drugs again. She said she would work in a rubber plantation or fruit orchard instead.

Case Study 6: Phi Phew or Older sister Phew (a made-up name)

Phi Phew is 28 years old when she was arrested before her plan was completely or successfully carried out. The first time she committed the offense was because she wanted to have a lot of money so that she could buy a car and a house. At that time she had a boyfriend who was also 24 years old. She and her boyfriend sold ice (methamphetamine) and were arrested with 2 g. of it in their possession and were sentenced to 3 years. Both of them were lured by police officers to sell the drug. They tried to fight the lawsuit. Nevertheless, they were lucky as a royal pardon was granted after they were in prison for only two months. She blamed it on her boyfriend and was angry with him and therefore as soon as they were released she left him. Her second, and latest, offense was the same charge, possession of drugs for sale and distribution. This time was different from the first time because didn't commit the second offense because she needed money.

Case Study 7: Phi Oo or Older sister Oo (a made-up name)

Phi Oo was 33 years old who had been convicted four times on charges of drug possession for sale and distribution. She blamed the first offense on her ex-husband. She said that she did not know anything about it but she was in his car. He told her to wait in the car while he went to see his friend for a few minutes. She had no idea that her husband used and sold drugs even though they slept on the same bed every night. She didn't know where he is the drugs in the house. While he was talking to a man, whom he said was his friend, he was arrested because that man was actually undercover officer. She was also arrested because she was with him selling 8 tablets of drug. She claimed that she really did not know anything about it, but no one would believe her because she was his wife and was there waiting for him in the car. She was shown the money her husband hid under the bed and was surprised at the amount of 20,000-30,000 Baht and was unaware where it from. That first time, she was given a 5-year-and-4-month sentence. She served the entire sentence in prison without being bailed out or pardoned. She had to sell a plot of land to fund an unsuccessful defense. She said society did not give ex-prisoners a chance and so seeking an honest job was difficult.

She claimed to also be innocent of her second offense. She was at home with her father and her husband. Her younger brother, who often brought his girlfriend home, brought his girlfriend home brought her again that day and then they went out with her father and her husband leaving her at home alone. She saw a bag that her younger brother probably forgot on the table so she picked it up and took it to his room and did not open it. Police officers came with a warrant to search the house and they found 400 amphetamine tablets and one gram of ice in the bag. As a result, she was arrested on a charge of drug possession for sale and distribution. A bag that did not belong to her but was in her house was the cause for her being arrested. She said the testimony she gave

led to her father and her husband being found not guilty.

Case Study 8: Phi Noot or Older sister Noot (a made-up name)

Phi Noot was 39 years old, the first time she was arrested for selling 30 amphetamine tablets, and was sentenced to 4-year-and-3-month imprisonment at Trang Prison though she did not have to serve the entire sentence because there was a royal pardon. The second time was on a charge of using two tablets of amphetamine, and was sentenced to 4 years in prison at the same prison, Trang Prison. She served the full term of the sentence. The third time she was arrested on the charge of possession of drugs for sale and distribution, the same charge as the first time. The fourth time was on a charge of selling 20,000 tablets of amphetamine and was sentenced to 33-year imprisonment, and this time at Nakhon Si Thammarat Prison. Her reason for committing the offenses on each occasion was that she had no choice. This was a short cut for her to have a comfortable life and became rich overnight as she received tens of thousands of Baht for doing it. At first, she thought that she would do it only a few times and stop but it was not easy to get out of the circle because the incentive was so good and if she got out she was afraid that she would be killed to keep her mouth shut. When she was arrested, she was sorry. Her children had grown up and she wanted to send them to school to have good education and to have a master's degree, not a limited education like herself. She said she had no way to do anything as she wished and she had to accept the consequences.

4.2 Analysis of Drug Offense Recidivism among Female Inmates

The data from the case studies revealed that recidivism occurs easily among offenders. The more times they have committed offenses, if they are not arrested, the more they repeat the offenses, and it seems to be a never ending circle. If there had been no law governing them, recidivism cases would probably be overwhelming. There is a saying "When there is the first time, the second time follows naturally". This can be seen from some of the cases that the individual did not need the money, like Phi Chuk who had enough money to live on and buy things even though she was not a millionaire, she had a comfortable life in a good loving family. Moreover, in the case of Mrs. Waew, people close to her like her boyfriend or husband persuaded her to deal with drugs because these people were drug sellers before she knew them. In the case of Phi Phew, she and her husband sold drugs together with a plan to become rich overnight by illegal means get married and live together. It is easier for offenders to repeat their offenses, especially when they have close relationships with criminals since they would be in an environment that afford opportunities to commit offenses. An example of this is the case of Phi Oo who did not know that the person close to her associated with drugs as it was hidden from her. It was by chance that she happened to be in the car on that day, and accidentally got involved in the situation and was arrested with her husband. On the contrary, Phi Noot voluntarily sold drugs for the happiness of her family and also her own greed as she wanted to have an easy life with a lot of money. She was not satisfied with the amount of money she earned by honest means, and decided to sell drugs without telling her husband about it. In the case of Phi Khaek, she supported her boyfriend by selling drugs even though they had just met. It is natural for women to want to be loved, cared for, and protected by their boyfriends, therefore, they would do anything to please the men in hope that they would live together happily afterward. Women do not want to say no to men, and so men take advantage over them using "love" as an excuse and reason. Women dream of a beautiful future with their men so they are ready to do anything for them with love. Being intimate, love, and attachment to men are risk factors that are dangerous and contribute to women re-offending.

Most female inmates who re-offend did it because of hardships within their families. They did not have enough money to cover their expenses; they have many dependents in their families such as their aged parents in addition to their own children, especially young children that incur a lot of expenses for their upbringing. In some cases, such as Phi Khaek's case, her husband did not support her after their divorce. Most of this type of man usually end the relationship and take no responsibility in raising their children. Phi Khaek had three children to raise; that was a heavy burden for a woman, in particular, her youngest child was only one year old. Thus, she had many expenses to take care of. Her husband left her to struggle alone through many hardships. Through selling clothes during the economic downturn, she made only just enough to feed her family each day and hardly enough to raise her three children. Most divorced women have to shoulder the burden alone. Only a minority of women are lucky enough to have parents or relatives to help taking care of their children. When women live with many family members with a young child and other children who are growing up and elderly dependent parents, family expenses like food, milk, tuition fees, medicine, water, electricity, and others are increasing, it becomes a burden that is too heavy for them. Consequently, resorting to crime is the only means of survival for their families. With the responsibilities of motherhood, these women have to commit offenses repeatedly. For example, Mrs. Waew, who had three children, the youngest being 6 years old, was persuaded by a person close to her to use and sell drugs. However, the second time she committed an offense to get attention from her husband.

Subsequently she realized that it was a foolish act that resulted in her return to prison. She said she did it because she had to struggle alone to raise the family. She did not earn enough from selling food to raise her three children even though her mother also used the money from her mangos teen orchard and rubber plantation to help with some of the expenses. The fruit orchard and rubber plantation were not very large so her mother did not make much money from them, and therefore, her expenses of her family still exceeded her income. Therefore, she had to sell drugs, and for her fourth offense, she was sentenced to 60 years and 4 months in prison at which point she thought that she would probably die before the end of her sentence. For the survival of children and family, women have to commit offenses repeatedly despite knowing what the consequences will be. As can be seen from the case of Miss Wansiri who said “Even though I promised myself that I would never have anything to do with drugs again, I did it anyway because I did not have enough money for my expenses. I also knew what life in prison was like so I was really not afraid of it. I knew that life in prison was not comfortable but I would get three meals a day for sure. The amount of money I received from selling drugs each time was a lot and so it was worth it.” When Miss Wansiri was released after her first sentence, she thought she would never do it again. She was lucky to have a job at the Mall shopping center in Bang Kapi, Bangkok; however, she could not do it for a long time due to her poor health. She had asthma and had to return to her hometown in Nakhon Si Thammarat where she met her new man. This man was like a nightmare for her because he led her back to the prison again even though she said that she was not angry with him, still loved him and was ready to forgive him.

Furthermore, drugs have long been a problem for Thai society and will not easily be eradicated. The rich are extremely rich while the poor are extremely poor, and the number of poor people at the grass root level is more than half the total population of the country. When the living conditions and life factors are not very good for the poor, they choose to take risks by gambling and buying both underground and government lottery tickets. Some choose to risk doing illegal business with a high return over a short period even when they have to risk losing their own and their families’ honor and reputation. In all the eight cases of this study, the reasons given by the female inmates were not different from each other as they all committed drug offenses because they had financial problems, and wanted to receive a lot of money to improve their living conditions so that their families would be comfortable, and their children would have a good future and education. The problem of living conditions of the poor is not easy to solve. They have to work hard to make their lives better, which is not easy. Therefore, some of them resort to crime, that is, selling drugs. From the eight cases, amphetamine and ice were the top two types of drug chosen by the female inmates who said they only wanted to do it one time. If they sold hundreds or thousands of tablets at once, they can get a lot of money in a short space of time. They just deliver drugs, receive money, and then they immediately have a large amount of cash for use for anything they want to have or do. Even though they are arrested and sentenced to terms in prison, some of them reoffended as many as four times like Phi Khaek who knew later that she was pregnant and finally had to raise her baby in the prison. Despite knowing that they did wrong, they still chose to commit the same offense again because they could not earn enough money. Similarly, Aunt Mee who was almost 50 years old chose to earn money through crime because she had to raise two grandchildren whose parents were divorced. She did not want her grandchildren to become social problems, thus she decided to sell amphetamine. Aunt Mee’s sister and husband were in the same prison but in different zones so they did not get to see each other. She met her sister at meal times but she could not see her husband at all no matter how much she missed him and wanted to see him because there was a high wall separating them. Looking from the building where she was over towards the other zone, she could only see roofs that were far away, and people who looked as small as ants from afar.

Therefore, it can be said that recidivism among female inmates takes place due mainly to their being stuck in a poverty trap. No one would want a poor quality of life; everyone wants to have a warm family, and wants to provide care for his or her family. Thus, “money” is undeniably necessary for survival in society. With a failed family, with a divorce, and with no parents, no relatives to provide support, women have no choice but return to commit an offense either with or without an intention to do it. When they are imprisoned again, they are classified as bad prisoners. Nevertheless, they tolerate it because all they seek is money to feed their families, though a few of them wanted to have more money only to make life more comfortable. They cannot restrain themselves from committing the offenses again when they are persuaded by persons close to them whether they are friends, boyfriends, or lovers. They are usually charged with possessing drugs for sale and distribution, and some are charged with drug use, as illustrated in the eight cases of this study. In these case studies, all of them committed more than one drug offense, from two to four times. They think that although prison life is uncomfortable and inconvenient, at least they are certain to have three meals a day. The only reasons they don’t want to be in prison for a long time are that they lack freedom, and they want to be close to their children and families. The latter reason is particularly hard for inmates who are mothers who love their children dearly and risk their life seeking money to feed them. Life of the poor is pitiful. Even though they feel guilty, sorry, sad,

despondent and desperate, and think that they will never ever do it again; they want to have an honest job. Nevertheless, after they have served their sentences, whether having served the full term or granted a royal pardon and return as a normal member of the community, they find that an honest job does not provide them enough money to raise the family, so they return to the same old routine of drug offenses. A few of them do not pay much attention to life and only want to have some fun each day. When these people, like Phi Phew, meet their former high school friends who are part of a drug culture, they join them and are eventually caught and sentenced to prison again. Therefore, a poor social environment and bad influences from people close to them drive or push them in into a criminal lifestyle from which they cannot withdraw themselves.

According to prison officers and warders, the causes of the never-ending problem of recidivism among female inmates are males who are either their boyfriends or husbands. Some men hide their acts or behavior related to drugs from the women while others persuade women to do the same by saying that they will do it only a few times to get enough money for their family's well-being. Most women are not well educated, are naive, gullible, and love their men dearly. Thus, the women commit offenses and are imprisoned. After being in prison for some time, their attitude toward being in prison changes. They feel that life in prison is not too bad, and not unbearable. These women are mostly those who commit drug offenses for the first time and are sentenced to only a few years in prison. As a result, after being released and returning to the same society and struggling situation, they re-offend because they cannot break away from the vicious cycle.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

The above analysis illustrates that female inmates in the case study committed offenses repeatedly due to their living conditions, insufficient income, hardships, and personal nature or trait. Inmates who are not afraid of receiving the penalties are those who are not worried about their future. They never consider that such behavior is not worth it or that in exchange for a few minutes pleasure they will eventually end up in prison for many years if they are arrested. They think that when they are in prison, they will soon be granted a royal pardon. This attitude makes it difficult for female inmates to return to normal society, especially those who have committed offenses for the second time or more. It can lead to an increase in criminal problems in society even though these female inmates have been immersed in a behavior correcting process and trained in a socialization course organized by the Ministry of Justice (Mukura, 2011). There are also other causes such as their communities label them as criminals and do not give them opportunity to take up honest employment. Another is that while they are in prison, the environment and their fellow inmates change them, usually in a more violent way as some of them are faced with long sentences, so they probably teach or transfer unsocial values to other inmates. Moreover, inmates who have been in prison repeatedly can adapt to it and committing offenses may become their habit. These can make them social outcasts. They are not afraid of committing offenses again when they have a chance to without thinking of the consequences. Committing offenses has become part of their lifestyle that they cannot stop. When they are imprisoned, they pretend to be a good person, and when they are released, they repeatedly re-offend. They are happy with the way life is, and contempt for social norms is part of their personality. Thus, they can be called habitual criminals or criminals who have no fear of committing repeat crimes (Jaiklongkleaw, 2003).

Female inmates who are they will be first-time offenders when first imprisoned usually think that they will never commit another crime when they are released to spend their lives outside the prison system. However, with the passage of time, being in prison for a long time can change their attitude. That is, the same as the environment and people around them can change them, too. People close to them in their community that have been dealing or associating with drugs may become their boyfriends who later persuade them to sell or use drugs by telling them that they can build their future together. Women usually agree easily with what their boyfriends tell them. Some women who live in a slum where there is drug trafficking can easily return to committing drug offenses when they have no chance to have an honest job. As a result, they have no job to earn money for their own and their families' survival, especially those women who have to raise children alone because they are divorced. This corresponds to a study that found that repeat offenders usually have normal physical and mental conditions, and so are their families and relatives even when traced back to the past. However, what makes them become criminals are mental or emotional deficiencies that are found later that may have been caused by the pressure of some situations that have gradually forced them behave in the way that they do. This mostly happens during adolescence. When they commit offenses repeatedly, they become accustomed to it. During this time, their personality changes and they become criminals at a young age (Jaiklongkleaw, 2003). Repeat criminals become skillful in their chosen behavior and the opportunities to make mistakes are minimized. Professional criminals must have motives to choose to follow a life of crime. They commit crimes continuously for money; at first they probably do it because they have to or are influenced by the environment. Then they continue doing it as their

main occupation. Committing crimes is a type of venture; if criminals are lucky they get money, if not, they get arrested. Therefore, when these female inmates are arrested and imprisoned, they are prepared for it. Many of them have been in prison before so they can just spend their time each day waiting to be released. They do not give up using or selling drugs. Some criminals of this type are from good and well educated families but they associate with bad people or it can be because of their own extravagance that forces them to use or sell drugs. After a long period of time, they become professional hardened criminals, and penalties do not have any effects on them because viciousness is their inborn trait (Inthichai, 2009). Persons who have been accused of committing drug offenses and sentenced to imprisonment are labeled by society as offenders, according to Labeling Theory. Offenses take place because society categorizes or labels them, and when offenders are involved in the justice process and other procedures in society, they categorize them as having criminal behavior. Consequently, offenders accept the labeling, and set the direction of their behavior in the future to be in accordance with the social perception. In other words, offenses take place as a result of interactions between individuals and society (Boonnak, 1997; Boonnak, 1998). People whose main occupation is drug crime would think before committing an offense whether they would be arrested or not. They would choose to commit a crime related to drugs if they think: they will be happy using the money gained from committing that offense; might be arrested because there are police officers in the vicinity and if arrested, the penalty will not be severe, or they might be pardoned before the sentence term ends, or they consider the risk acceptable. If they think that the penalty will be severe, they will not be happy committing the offense and they will not choose to commit that crime. If the justice system had penalties that were severe, timely, and could punish every offender, it would result in an immediate increase of crimes in society (Khantee, 2000). In addition, rejection by society is another cause of recidivism. Furthermore, there are several factors contributing to ex-prisoners committing offenses repeatedly, especially drug offenses. They follow what people close to them such as their boyfriends or friends do because they want to have a lot of money, so there is behavior interference (Chunhasopak, 2008). There was a new behavior that replaces an old one in the case of Phi Chuk who associated with friends who used and sold drugs, and as a result, she learned to use drugs, and she eventually joined them which led to her subsequent arrest and conviction. People who have used drugs, and are later arrested and sentenced to imprisonment, often go back to the group of friends when they are released. In turn, their association with criminals in a drug dealing environment leads them to acquire the necessary skills to continue their previous activities. Thus, they learn about values, attitudes, types of crimes (Thasanachaikul, 2005).

The findings of this study will be beneficial to individuals and organizations directly related to drug offenses among female inmates such as female inmates themselves, their parents, penologists, the Department of Corrections, or related agencies, interested individuals, etc. who need to give their consideration, interest, and special attention to help and improve female offenders' behavior. This is to prevent female offenders who continually re-offend from continuing without fear by increasing the severity of sentencing and immediately taking action on offenders so that they would be afraid of the immediate penalty. The numbers of drug-related crimes has dramatically increased. It is very interesting to see offenders who have been through the justice process and imprisonment for a period of time, trained, treated, corrected, rehabilitated mentally, and trained in vocational courses according to principles of penology still commit offenses again. These inmates should be able to live happily in society; however, a large number of them return to repeatedly re-offend. According H.M. the King's speech, "...if we cannot train inmates to improve their behavior, when they are released, it is likely that they will be delinquents who harm society again..." Therefore, the challenge for the Department of Corrections is to make inmates who are released not re-offend (Jumnearparn, 2008).

Therefore, through socialization and establishment of diverse public and certain religious awareness: religious way of life, being ashamed of certain immoral or customarily indecent acts, the spiritual leaders can supervise the female inmates to have religious way of life. This is in accordance with Thitirat (2004), Sereetrakul (2009) and (Laeheem, 2013) who claim that a person's behavioral development is, indeed, influenced by socialization which can enable a person to have desired characteristics as required by the society. Accordingly, through the family institution and socialization which emphasize social order, establishment of discipline, acceptable life expectations, social roles and certain life skills, the person will eventually realize what social position he is holding and how he should act within his designated roles.

Furthermore, cooperation from relatives and related organizations are required to prevent recidivism; together we must prevent and solve the problem of recidivism as the findings of this study revealed that in broken homes or divorced families, sometimes there is nobody who teaches or warns children starting from an early age to enable them to know what is right or wrong, and what they should or should not do. Some female repeat offenders have to shoulder all the burdens in the family unit alone, therefore, solving the problem of recidivism should begin

from the family level, and should not be overlooked.

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