

# Dr. Thaatchaayini Kananatu

Email: [thaatchaayini.kananatu@monash.edu](mailto:thaatchaayini.kananatu@monash.edu)  
ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0002-7532-5438>

## Profile

Academic with experience teaching law for undergraduates and postgraduates. Chevening Scholar with multidisciplinary research interest in socio-legal scholarship, law in context, the intersections of law, race and gender, as well as in ethics, human rights and social justice.

## Academic Work Experience

**Senior Lecturer in Law (July 2020 – ongoing)**  
**Department of Business Law & Taxation, School of Business, Monash University, Malaysia**

**Department Coordinator (January 2019 – ongoing)**

**Lecturer in Law (July 2016 – December 2019)**

Teaching: Chief Examiner, Unit Coordinator and Lecturer for *Ethics and Global Corporate Governance*, and *International Trade Law* for postgraduate students undertaking the Master of International Business; and *International Trade Law* for undergraduate students. Previously lectured *Corporate Social Responsibility and Business Ethics*.

### Teaching & Learning Initiatives:

- Used the Assurance of Learning (AOL) continuous improvement process to implement continuous improvement in teaching. Attended the AOL Seminar I (AACSB) in October 2019 to learn how to measure effectiveness of aligning assessments to course learning objectives.
- Implemented the Research Skills Development (RSD) Framework to develop research-led teaching and learning. Developed assessments and marking rubrics using the RSD Framework for the International Trade Law module.
- Completed the Foundation for Effective Teaching under the Monash Continuing Education Excellence Development (CEED) programme.
- Constructed and designed the curriculum for a new unit *Ethics and Global Corporate Governance* incorporating business and human rights, and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

### Engagement/Service:

- Department coordinator and representative for the School Education Committee (2019 onwards). School coordinator for the Diploma in Higher Education Studies (DHES) programme (2017 – ongoing).
- Organised international conferences as committee member of the 2018 International Conference of Gender and Sexuality in Asia (COGEN) and the 2017 Genderworks Conference.
- Volunteered to be a mentor for the Sudanese Refugee community-based organisation under the Social Protection Fund for Refugees Project in collaboration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2018).
- Committee work include: School Academic Progress Committee member (2018 – 2019); RSD Adoption and Dissemination Committee (2018 – 2019).

**Academic  
Work  
Experience**

**Law Lecturer (March 2015 – June 2016)**

**Centre for Commercial Law and Justice, Sunway Business School, Sunway University, Malaysia**

Teaching: Lectured and tutored for the subjects: *Law and Society* (1<sup>st</sup> Year BSc. Psychology), *Business Law* (1<sup>st</sup> Year Business), *Introduction to Law* (Diploma in Business).

Teaching & Learning Initiatives:

- Undertook the Employee Development Programme at Lancaster University, United Kingdom (14<sup>th</sup>–18<sup>th</sup> March 2016) to learn and implement pedagogical theories and strategies to teaching.
- Reconstructed the subject *Law and Society*, by incorporating current theoretical frameworks and new case-studies, as well as localizing content.
- Developed new assessment styles for *Introduction to Law*, to incorporate the IRAC (Issue-Rule-Application-Conclusion) method in the curriculum.

Engagement/Service:

Law department representative and member of the Research Committee for the Association to Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) accreditation (2016).

**Sessional Lecturer and Tutor (May 2009 – November 2014)**

**School of Arts and Social Sciences, Monash University, Malaysia**

Teaching: Lectured *Media Law* and *Global Cities* as well as tutored in *Cultural & Communication Policy*. Guest Lecture on *Social Movements and the Law* in the Contemporary Issues in Asia Module (Masters in Arts programme).

Also lectured *Malaysian Constitutional & Administrative Law* at Taylor's Law School, Taylor's University, Malaysia (August - December 2014).

**Law Lecturer (October 2006 – May 2009)**

**Taylor's Law School, Taylor's University, Malaysia**

Teaching: Lectured for the University of Reading (U.K.) LLB Law twinning programme. Delivered lectures and conducted tutorials for second year law undergraduate students in *Equity & Trust* and *International Law*. Achieved high teaching evaluations and peer review by academic staff from the School of Law, University of Reading.

Teaching & Learning Initiatives:

- Implemented the Multiple Intelligence test for students to discern learning styles and construct teaching strategies.
- Attended pedagogical training on engaging students and classroom management.

Engagement/Service:

- Organiser and Academic Advisor for the 2009 Human Rights Colloquium.
- Organised law debates and Academic Advisor of the Law Debate Society.
- Coach for the Taylor's law moot team that participated and became the runner-up in the 2008 LAWASIA Moot Competition and the 2008 Phillip C. Jessup International Law Moot Court Competition.

## Education

### **PhD in Arts (2010 – 2014) Monash University, Malaysia**

Obtained a PhD with distinction (Pass with No Amendments).

Title of the PhD thesis: *The Mobilization of Indians in Malaysia: The Role of the Law in Ethno-Cultural Minority Mobilization*

(e-thesis link: <http://arrow.monash.edu.au/hdl/1959.1/965727>).

- A sociolegal study that explored the role of the law and rights in contentious or social movement politics of an ethno-cultural minority group in Malaysia. Took an innovative multidisciplinary approach using politico-legal theories as well as a single case-study method to develop a unique theoretical framework.
- Conducted extensive interviews of political leaders, lawyers, non-governmental organizations and community leaders to gather empirical data.
- The research broke new grounds in understanding the link between law, rights and ethno-cultural (or racial) minorities in illiberal democratic or authoritarian political settings.

The thesis was reviewed by Dr. Petra Mahy, Centre for Socio-Legal Studies, University of Oxford. See: <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/12505>.

### **LLM/Masters in International Law (2001–2002) Oxford Brookes University, Oxford, United Kingdom**

Obtained a distinction in International Law and a merit in International Banking Law, International Human Rights Law, Advanced Legal Research Methodology and the Masters dissertation. The following sub-specializations were undertaken:

- *International Human Rights Law*: Researched and produced a paper on racial minorities. The Masters dissertation was on *The Right to Self-Determination and Minority Protection: A Case of the Tamils in Sri Lanka*. The dissertation explored the tension between secession, autonomy, minority rights under international human rights law and the state's right to sovereignty.
- *International Law*: Participated in a Model United Nations, representing Malaysia in an international security issue. Presented a paper at the International Law Colloquium in Oxford Brookes University on the role of minority protection in anti-terrorism as well as internal security laws and regulations.
- *International Banking Law*: Researched and wrote a paper on the legal implications of electronic banking and cross-border financial transactions.

### **LLB/Bachelor of Laws (Honours) (1997–1999) Cardiff University, Wales, United Kingdom**

Graduated with a Second Class Honours degree.

Subjects completed include Crime & Penology, Sociology of Law, Discrimination & Law, Equity & Trusts, Evidence, European Community Law, Company Law, Land Law, Maritime Law, and Tort. First year subjects completed in INTI College, Malaysia were English Legal System, Constitutional Law, Criminal Law, Contract Law and Legal Skills.

**Professional Qualifications**

**Certificate of Legal Practice (CLP)/ Malaysian Bar Examination (1999 – 2000)**  
Legal Profession Qualifying Board, Malaysia

Passed in first sitting. Subjects completed: Civil Procedure, Criminal Procedure, Evidence, General Paper (Contract & Tort), & Professional Practice (Land Law, Advocacy, Ethics, Bankruptcy & Probate).

**Scholarships/ Awards**

**Monash University Higher Research Degree Scholarship (2010 – 2013)**

A full sponsorship of PhD tuition fees for three and half years with stipend.

**British High Commissioners Chevening Award (1997 – 1999)**

A sponsorship of tuition fees for two years of law undergraduate studies.

**Academic Publications**

Research Monograph:

Kananatu, T. (2020). *Minorities, Rights and the Law in Malaysia*, Asian Studies Series. London: UK, Routledge.

<https://www.routledge.com/Minorities-Rights-and-the-Law-in-Malaysia/Kananatu/p/book/9780367862398>

Journal Articles:

Goh, J. N., & Kananatu, T. (2019). Mak nyahs and the dismantling of dehumanisation: Framing empowerment strategies of Malaysian male-to-female transsexuals in the 2000s. *Sexualities*, 22(1–2), 114-130.

<https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460717740256>

Kananatu, T. (2018). The Politico-Legal Mobilisation of Ethnic Indians before Malaysia's 2018 Election. *The Round Table*, 107(6), 703-716.

<https://doi.org/10.1080/00358533.2018.1545938>

French, J., Koh, S. M., & Kananatu, T. (2018). The 14<sup>th</sup> General Elections and the Changing Business Environment in a "New" Malaysia. *Journal of International Business Education*, 13, 319-332.

<http://www.neilsonjournals.com/JIBE/abstractjibe13newmalaysia.html>

Research Report:

Antolak-Saper, N., Kowal, S., Lindsey, S., Ngeow, C.Y. and Kananatu, T. (2020). *Drug Offences and the Death Penalty in Malaysia: Fair Trial Rights and Ramifications*. Monash University.

[https://www.monash.edu/\\_data/assets/pdf\\_file/0011/2213867/MU\\_ADPAN\\_report\\_v6.pdf](https://www.monash.edu/_data/assets/pdf_file/0011/2213867/MU_ADPAN_report_v6.pdf)

Edited Books:

Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (Eds.) (2020). *Vulnerable groups in Malaysia*, The Global Asia Series. Berlin: Germany, De Gruyters.

<https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/540040#.XxaYiKcT8Po>

Goh, J.N., Bong, S.A. & Kananatu, T. (Eds.) (forthcoming 2020). *Effecting Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia – Finding resolutions through conflicts*, London: UK, Springer.

**Academic  
Publications**

Book chapters:

Bong, S. Goh, J. & Kananatu, T. (forthcoming 2020). Revisiting Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia: Bridging academia and activism. In Bong, S., Goh, J. & Kananatu, T. (Eds.), *Effecting Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia – Finding resolutions through conflicts*, London: UK, Springer.

Kananatu, T. & French, J. (forthcoming 2020). Hindu mothers and Muslim-convert fathers: Custody battles at the intersection of gender, religion and rights in Malaysia. In Bong, S., Goh, J. & Kananatu, T. (Eds.), *Effecting Gender and Sexuality Justice in Asia – Finding resolutions through conflicts*, London: UK, Springer.

Kananatu, T., Santra, N. & Yahya, E. (forthcoming 2021). Riding on Research: A Library-Faculty Partnership. In Torres, L. et al (Eds.), *Connecting the library to the curriculum: Pedagogies that impact student learning*. Singapore: Springer.

Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (2020). Vulnerability and the Vulnerable in an Asian Plural State. In Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (Eds.), *Vulnerable groups in Malaysia*. The Global Asia Series. Berlin: Germany, De Gruyters.

Kananatu, T. (2020). The Trans Community as Outliers of Malaysian Society. In Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (Eds.), *Vulnerable groups in Malaysia*. The Global Asia Series. Berlin: Germany, De Gruyters.

Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (2020). The Vulnerable in Malaysia: Moving Forward. In Kananatu, T. & Koh, G. M. (Eds.), *Vulnerable groups in Malaysia*. The Global Asia Series. Berlin: Germany, De Gruyters.

Kananatu, T. (2016). A Sociolegal Study of the Indian Minority in Malaysia. In D. Jayasooria & K.S. Nathan (Eds.), *Contemporary Malaysian Indians* (pp.173-188). Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia, Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia.

Other publications:

Kananatu, T. (2017). Law, Gender and Mobilisation: The Case of the *Mak Nyahs* in Malaysia. *Praxis* (Thomson Reuters).

Kananatu, T. (2016). Young Indian Women in Malaysia & the Eleventh Malaysia Plan: Beneficiary or Blindspot? In *Reviewing the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (2016-2020): Tapping the Opportunities & Plugging Into the Provisions* (pp.71-73). Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia, Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia.

Kananatu, T. (2012, October 23). Gay Activism in Singapore: A Review of “How Does Law Matter to Social Movements? A Case Study of Gay Activism in Singapore” by Lynette Janice Chua. *Dissertation Reviews*. Retrieved from <http://dissertationreviews.org/archives/1538>

**Non-Academic  
Publications**

Kananatu, T. (2018). The Bundle and the Suitcase. In D. Mukherjee & S. Bakar (Eds.), *Bitter Root, Sweet Fruit* (pp.192-205). Petaling Jaya: Malaysia, Word Works.

Kananatu, T. (2007). In God’s Belly. In D. Mukherjee (Ed.), *Silverfish New Writing* (pp.123-135). Kuala Lumpur: Malaysia, Silverfish.

**Conferences/  
Presentations**

Academic conferences:

**28 – 31 May 2020 – Hyatt Regency Convention Centre, Denver, United States  
[Virtual Conference]**

Presented a paper on gender, religion and law at the *Law and Society Association Conference*, organised by the Law and Society Association, United States.

**8 – 9 July 2019 – International Center for Ethnic Studies (ICES), Colombo, Sri Lanka**

Invited to present a paper on ‘Race, Rights and the "Quiet Minority": Mobilising the Law from the Colonial to the Postcolonial’ at the *Migratory Justice: Legal Histories of South Asian Migration Workshop* organised by the South Asian Studies Council, Yale Macmillan Centre, Yale University.

**18 February 2019 - Monash University, Malaysia**

Co-presented a paper with Vanitha Sundra-Karean, on ‘The Changing Nature of Values Underpinning Malaysian Constitutionalism – Tracing the Ebb and Flow of Law Consciousness – Where from; Where to beyond GE14?’ at the Conference on *Malaysian Constitutionalism Post-GE14: A New Dawn?*

**12– 14 November 2018 - Monash University, Malaysia**

Presented a paper on ‘Legal Identities, Cross-Dressing, and Gender Dysphoria: Contesting Gender Identity in the Malaysian Courts’ at the *International Conference on Gender and Sexuality in Asia (CoGen)*.

**11 – 13 December 2017 - University of Adelaide, Adelaide, Australia**

Presented a refereed paper on ‘Using the Researcher Skill Development Framework to Construct Marking Rubrics for Law Assessments’ at the *International Models of Engaged Teaching and Learning (I-MELT) Conference*.

**1 – 3 December 2016 - Griffith University, Brisbane, Australia**

Presented a paper on ‘Law, Race and Group-Differentiated Rights in Malaysia: From the Colonial Past to the Post-Colonial Present’ at the *Law and Society Association of Australia and New Zealand Conference*. Attended the University of Southern Queensland’s *International and Comparative Law Colloquium on Legal Transplants*, 23<sup>rd</sup> – 24<sup>th</sup> November 2016.

**24 – 25 June 2014 - Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia, Malaysia**

Presented policy recommendations in a paper on ‘Law and Minorities: A Case-Study of Indians in Malaysia’ for the 11th Malaysia Plan (2016-2020) *Public Policy Research Consultation on Contemporary Malaysian Indians*.

**21 – 23 March 2013 - KoGuan Law School, Shanghai Jiao Tong University, Shanghai, China**

Presented a paper on ‘Law, Minority Group Identity and Rights: The Legal Mobilization of Indians in Colonial Malaya (1890-1957)’ at the *3rd East Asian Law and Society Conference*.

**10 March 2012-St. Anthony’s College, Oxford University, Oxford, United Kingdom**

Presented a paper on ‘Legal Mobilization in Post-Colonial Malaysia: The Law as a Political Tool for Marginalized Groups’ at the *Southeast Asian Studies Symposium: Contemporary Issues in Southeast Asia*.

**Conferences/  
Presentations**

**13 November 2011 - Monash University, Malaysia**

Presented a paper on 'Law and Mobilization of Ethnic Minority Groups: the Case of the Indian Dalits and Malaysian Indians' at the *International Young Scholar's Conference*.

**15 October 2008 - University of Malaya, Malaysia**

Presented a paper on 'Strategies and Legal Opportunities for Ethnic Movements in Malaysia' at the *Proceedings of the International Conference on Ethnic Relations*.

Invited speaker:

**25 November 2017 – North-South Initiative, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia**

Invited to speak on 'The Mobilization of Indians in Malaysia' at a public forum on *Social Movements in Malaysia: From Protest Movements to Reform Movements* organised by Institute of Ethnic Studies, National University of Malaysia.

**26 August 2017 – Armada Hotel, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia**

Invited to speak on 'Envisioning the Future: Multiculturalism, Equality and the Sustainable Development Goals' at a public forum on *A National Consultation on Malaysia's Indian Dilemma* organised by the Democratic Action Party of Malaysia.

**31 May 2015 – Putra World Trade Centre, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia**

Invited to speak on 'The 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan: Perspectives For Young Indian Women in Malaysia' at the *2<sup>nd</sup> National Symposium on Reviewing the 11<sup>th</sup> Malaysia Plan (2016-2020): Tapping the Opportunities & Plugging Into the Provisions* organised by the Institute of Ethnic Studies in collaboration with Malaysia's Prime Minister's Department.

**Research  
Grants/  
Projects**

**Harm Reduction International (HRI) Consultancy Grant – Euros 20,000**

(1<sup>st</sup> June – 31<sup>st</sup> March 2020)

Role: Chief Investigator with Sara Kowal (Monash Death Penalty Clinic), Natalia Antolak-Saper (Faculty of Law, Monash University Australia) and Chow Ying Ngeow (Anti-Death Penalty Asia Network).

Project Title: 'Comprehensive Actions Against the Death Penalty for Drug Offences'

- The study informs the policy debate in relation to the abolition of the death penalty in Malaysia; helps ensure the trial and sentencing process complies with national and international standards of human rights and due process protections; informs discussions about potential reform of death penalty legislation and judicial discretion; and informs discussions about strengthening fair trial guarantees.
- Research questions looked into the issues faced by vulnerable individuals (e.g. migrant workers and ethnic minorities).
- Semi-structured interviews were done with criminal lawyers who work in death penalty cases (particularly drug crimes).
- The report was launched on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2020 (virtual launch), with an introduction by the former Chief Justice Tan Sri Richard Malanjum.

**Research  
Grants/  
Projects**

**Monash University Education Excellence Grant Scheme – RM 20,000**  
(5<sup>th</sup> August – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020)

Role: Co-Investigator with Juliana French and Sharon Koh.

Project Title: 'Melting the Research Development Skill (RSD) framework into the Assurance of Learning (AOL) process'

The study intends to stimulate change in the teaching and learning process, by combining the Research Skill Development (RSD) framework with the Assurance of Learning (AoL) process, a standard for accreditation for business schools, by the Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB).

**Monash School of Business Seed Grant – RM 10,000**  
(25<sup>th</sup> Jan – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018)

Role: Chief Investigator with Loganathan Krishnan (Co-investigator).

Project Title: 'Legal and Policy Protection of Minority Language Education – Tamil Schools in Malaysia'

The study analyses the laws and policies pertaining to minority language education in Malaysia, using the Tamil schools as a case-study.

**Monash Education Academy Travel Grant – AUD 2,000**  
(25<sup>th</sup> July – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2017)

External grant awarded to attend and present a refereed paper at the I-MELT Conference in Adelaide, Australia.

**Global Asia in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Seed Grant – RM10,000**  
(November 2016 – November 2017)

Role: Chief Investigator.

Project Title: 'Rights, Gender Identity and Ethno-Religious Identity in the Malaysian Legal System (1957 – 2016)'

The study analysed the 1957 Federal Constitution of Malaysia, Malaysian civil laws, Islamic *Syariah* laws, and judicial decisions made from 1957 to 2016, in order to trace the changes in the interpretation and re-interpretation of gender identity as well as ethno-religious identity in the context of rights.

**Community & Volunteer Experience**

- From 2018 – 2019: Helped raise funds of RM 91,800 for a school toilet building project: for a minority school located in a rural district (South Carey Tamil Primary School, Carey Island, Malaysia).
- From January – December 2018: Mentor for the Sudanese Refugee community-based organisation under the Social Protection Fund for Refugees Project with the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR).
- From 2015 – 2016: Helped establish a mini-library for children from lower-income families, in a low-cost flat located in a rural area (Dengkil flats, Selangor, Malaysia). This project was done in collaboration with the University of Malaya student organisation.
- From 1995 – 1997: Volunteer English tutor for underprivileged children in an inner city urban school.

**Proficiencies**

- Excellent language proficiency in English (Written and Spoken); good proficiency in Bahasa/Malay (Written and Spoken); and moderate proficiency in Tamil (Written & Spoken).
- Excellent computer proficiency in Google Apps, Microsoft Word, Powerpoint, Excel and Outlook. Experienced in educational software such as Moodle, Panopto, Padlet, Blackboard and Socrative.
- Excellent researching, writing and editing skills.