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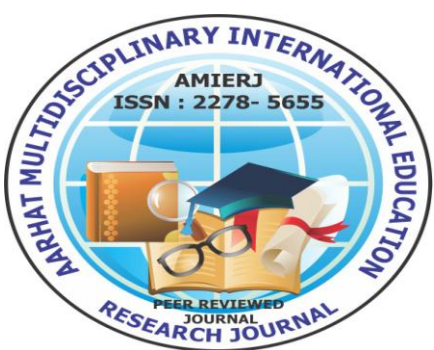
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## **ATTITUDE OF PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS TOWARDS INCLUSION OF STUDENT WITH DISABILITES IN GENERAL SCHOOL SETTINGS**

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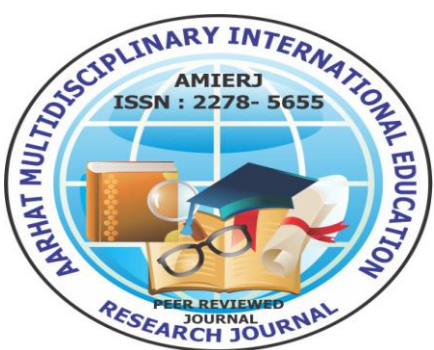
### **Abstract**

*In order to effective inclusion of students with special needs in general education classrooms, the teacher educator's community must overcome barriers toward inclusion including existing attitudes. The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward students with special needs. The sample consisted of 128 pre-service teachers studying in Haramaya University, Ethiopia. Results provided evidence that pre-service teachers had positive attitudes towards students with special needs. The overall findings suggest that pre-service teachers belonging to science stream and high SES and high educated family had positive attitude towards students with special needs with respect to all the aspects of their development i.e. cognitive, emotional and social development.*

**Key words:** *Pre-service teachers, inclusion and students with disabilities*

### **Introduction**

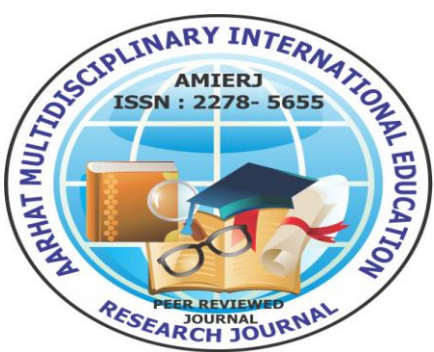
Today the main objective of special education in Ethiopia is to enable children with special educational needs to fully develop their individual potential. Many integrated schools in



Ethiopia are now adopting a whole school approach so that students with special needs can receive education in ordinary school along with their peers without disabilities. Such ideas led to the emergence of the concept of Inclusive Education for disabled. But the effective implementation of this inclusive education has many barriers even in government policy, practice and procedures. For the successful implementation of inclusive education, the actions of teachers, students, and all stakeholders must begin to overcome the obstacles of existing attitudes and values; lack of understanding; lack of necessary skills; limited resources; and inappropriate resources (UNESCO, 2005).

Inclusion has become the most frequently used when describing special education as specially designed instruction in general education and special education classroom. Aspiring teachers enter the classroom with their own personal beliefs, values and attitudes towards inclusion and their new primary responsibility to teach all students, especially students with disabilities. They have the challenge of providing effective education in inclusive settings for disabilities students but their attitude must be positive towards the target groups. As a result, many teachers facing classes containing students with disabilities, and many perceive themselves as being unprepared (Zhang et al. 2000). They were more negative about the impact of children with special needs on other children in the general education classroom (Hantngis and Oakford, 2003). Yellen et al. (2003) added that changing the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards students with special needs will require more than simple exposure and accepted in the general education classrooms. If students with special needs were to be completely integrated and accepted in the general education classroom, long –term changes in the attitudes of educational professionals would be required. So the present study attempted to find out the attitude of pre-service teachers towards inclusion of disabled in normal educational settings.

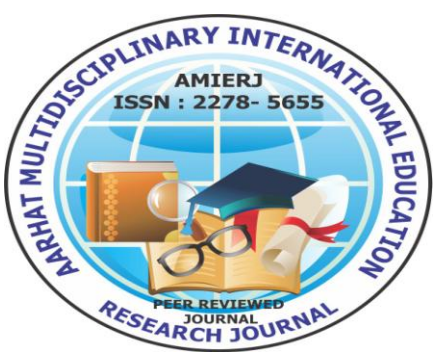
The purpose of this study was to determine the attitudes of pre-service teachers towards inclusion of students with special needs in general classroom.



### **Concept of Inclusive Education**

The inclusion of children with disabilities in the regular education classroom is a relatively recent phenomenon, taking centre-stage in educational reforms in the last two decades. Foreman (2005) defines inclusion as based on the 'philosophy that schools should, without question, provide for the needs of all the children in their communities, whatever the level of their ability or disability'. The philosophy of inclusive education envisions the idea of providing opportunities for students with disabilities to study as equal partners with their classmates without disabilities (Forlin, 2008; Mitchell, 2008). It is found that students with disabilities were enhanced their educational, social and emotional skills after getting appropriate accommodations and proper support in the general classroom. (Parua, 2008). Inclusion is the provision of services to students with disabilities in their neighborhood schools with necessary support services and supplementary aids for both children and teachers. It means meeting the needs of children with disabilities for a free and quality public education in the least restrictive and most effective environment. Salend (2008) highlighted four principles of effective inclusion: 1. All learners have equal access to general education programs, 2. Individual strength and challenges and diversity are accepted, appreciated and accommodated,. 3. Reflective practices and differentiated instruction engage all students, and 4. Community and collaboration are linked to provide quality programs and services for all students. In principle 3, the author explained that effective inclusion requires reflective educators to examine their attitudes and differentiate their assessment, teaching, and classroom management practices, to accommodate individual strengths and challenges and provide all students with meaningful access to and progress in the general education curriculum (Salend, 2008). The goal of inclusion is to engage all learners in collaborative, supportive, and nurturing classroom environments. All teachers are expected to give all students the service and accommodation they need to succeed.

Friend and Bursuck (2009) defined inclusive practices a variety of strategies and opinions designed and applied by education professionals to meet the needs of all learners. So, it is



essential to know the attitude of pre-service teachers towards student with special needs before they entering to the profession. Hence the presents study determines the attitudes of pre-service of teachers towards students with special needs.

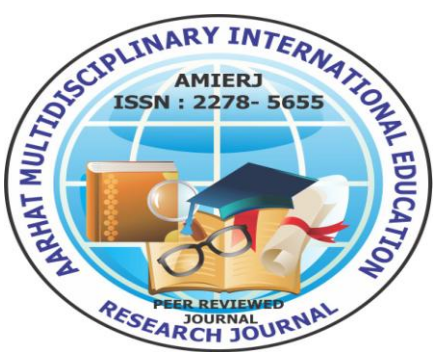
### **Attitudes of Pre-service Teachers**

One of the most significant stipulations that allow for successful inclusion of special education students is the attitudes or attitudes of the general education teacher regarding the inclusion of special education students into their classroom. Classrooms are now becoming more diverse with respect to students abilities, therefore sensitivity and awareness on the part of general education teacher is essential to promote successful inclusion. There is substantial research examining teachers attitude towards inclusion and disability. Sze (2009) carried a research on pre-service teachers' attitudes towards students with disabilities. The study revealed that the attitude of the general education teacher is one of the most important predictors of successful integration of students with disabilities in general education classrooms.

Singh (2012) examined the attitude of elementary school teachers towards inclusive education. Their findings showed that elementary school teachers with high experienced and more aged were positive attitude towards inclusive education.

Forlin, Loreman, Sharma and Earle (2009) concluded that the personal engagement and involvement in teaching students with disabilities will most likely continue to further acceptance and understanding of inclusion of students with disabilities in general education classrooms and improve attitudes toward inclusion. Yellan et al.,(2003) added that changing the attitudes of pre-service teachers toward students with special needs will require more than simple exposure to the students in general education classrooms. If students with special needs were to be completely integrated and accepted in the general education classroom, long-term changes in the attitudes of educational professionals would be required.

Kumar (2012) compared the attitude of pre-service teachers between different stream and locality towards inclusion of disabled in general education settings. Pre-service teachers



belonging to science stream and urban areas were found to be have more favourable attitude towards inclusion.

Golmic and Hansan (2012) determined the effects of an INCLUDED Experience on the attitudes, sentiments and concerns of pre-service teachers toward students with exceptional learning needs after 12 weeks of student teaching in secondary education classrooms. Results provided evidence that after completing an INCLUDED Experience, pre-service teachers had positive attitudes and decreased concerns toward inclusion. The overall findings suggest that the INCLUDED Experience shows promise as a model that pre-service teachers should follow to support, teach and engage students with exceptional learning needs in general education classrooms.

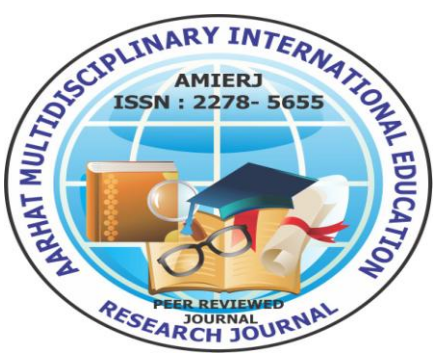
### **Method**

The present research work was a descriptive survey type of research. The sample consisted of a total of 128 pre-service teachers attending teacher training program Haramaya University, Ethiopia including female 57.81 % (n=74) and male 42.18% (n=54) student teachers. The pre-service teachers were seeking secondary teacher education program including stream like science 35.97% (n=46 ) and arts 64.06% (n=82). The students teachers belonged to the high SES 25.00% (n=32) and high SES 38 (n=38) and high and low educated family were 43.75% (n=56) and 56.25% (n=72) respectively.

### **Tools**

Socio-Economic Status Scale (2006) by Singh, Shyam & Kumar was used to measure the SES of students. An Attitude scale is prepared and standardized by the investigator for the collection of the data. The statement of the scale is expressing definite favorableness or unfavorableness about students with special needs.

This study has 40 item/statements spread over in four factors i.e. academic development, cognitive development, emotional and social development. This scale is designed to understand the differences in individual reactions to various situations. The scale is self administering. The



respondents are required to record their response in 5 categories i.e. strongly agree, agree, uncertain, disagree and strongly disagree.

Internal consistency reliability coefficients in the current study as measured by Cronbach’s coefficient alpha for the pre-test were high for the scale overall ( $r = 0.87$ ) and for the attitude towards academic development ( $r = 0.43$ ), cognitive development ( $r = 0.85$ ), emotional development and social development ( $r = 0.85$ ) item subsets on the pre-survey.

**Analysis and interpretation**

*Table-1*

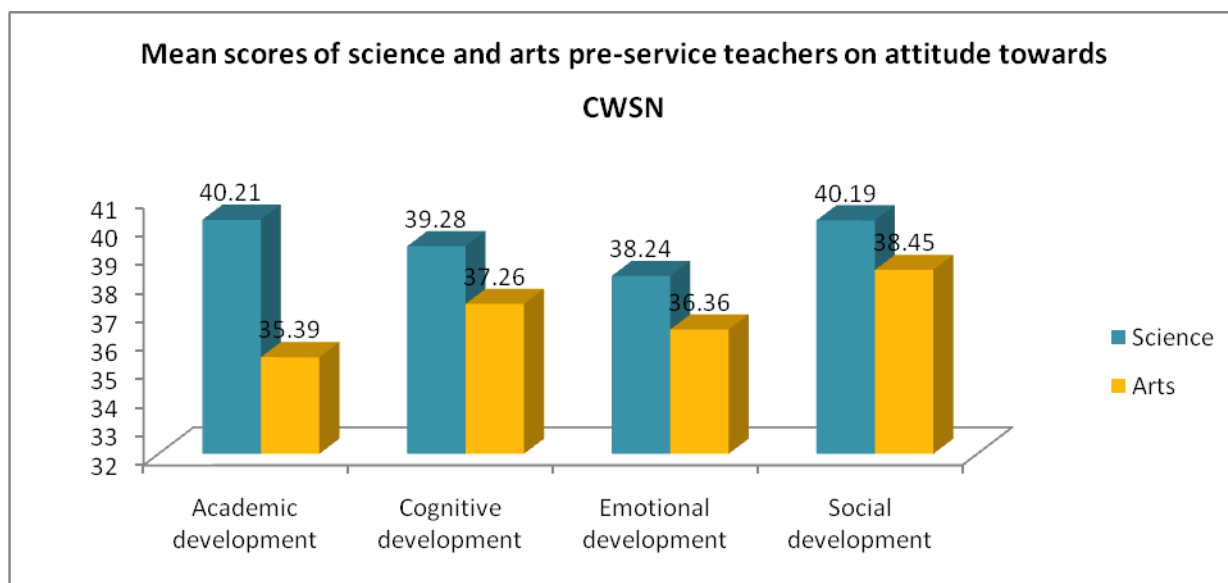
**Significance of difference between science and arts pre-service teachers on attitude towards Children With Special Needs scores**

Dimension of attitude towards CWSN	Science (N=46)		Arts (N= 82)		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic development	40.21	4.21	35.39	4.10	6.34**
Cognitive development	39.28	4.17	37.26	4.12	2.69**
Emotional development	38.24	4.16	36.36	4.34	2.44*
Social development	40.19	3.14	38.45	3.21	3.08**

Table Value of 108 df    at .05 level =1.96    \* significant at .05 level  
    at .01 level =2.58    \*\* Significant at .01 level

Table 4 and Fig.1 reveals that the mean scores on attitude towards various development of CWSN of science pre-service teachers are greater than the arts students. Further, there is statistically significant difference between the science and arts pre-service teachers on their attitude towards children with special needs. It indicates that science pre-service teachers were better attitude towards academic, cognitive, emotional and social development of children with special needs.

*Fig.1*



*Table-2*

**Significance of difference between pre-service teachers belonging to high and low socio-economic status on attitude towards Children with Special Needs**

Dimension of attitude towards CWSN	High SES (N=32)		Low SES(N= 38)		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic development	39.02	4.22	36.38	4.10	2.67**
Cognitive development	34.28	4.16	32.26	4.12	2.04*
Emotional development	35.45	4.13	31.34	4.34	4.06**
Social development	33.48	3.12	30.29	3.21	4.68**

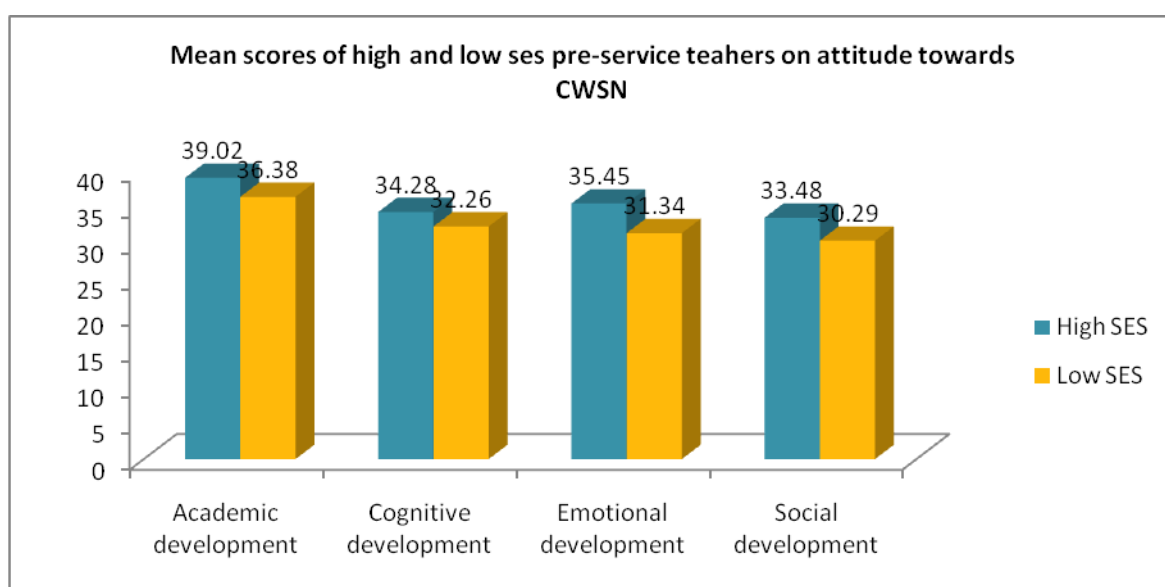
Table Value of 108 df at .05 level =1.96 \* significant at .05 level  
at .01 level =2.58 \*\* Significant at .01 level

Table 2 and Fig.2 reveals that the mean scores on attitude towards various development of CWSN of teachers belonging to high SES family are greater than low SES family. Further, there is statistically significant difference between the high and low SES pre-service teachers on



their attitude towards children with special needs. It indicates that high SES pre-service teachers were better attitude towards academic, cognitive, emotional and social development of children with special needs.

*Fig-2*



*Table-3*

***Significance of difference between the pre-service teachers belonging to high and low educated family on attitude towards Children with Special Needs***

Dimension of attitude towards CWSN	High Educated (N=56)		Low Educated (N= 72)		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Academic development	32.20	4.23	30.39	4.09	2.38*
Cognitive development	33.28	4.18	30.26	4.11	4.13**
Emotional development	35.22	4.13	31.36	4.31	5.25**
Social development	41.25	3.12	38.44	3.27	5.09**

Table Value of 108 df at .05 level =1.96

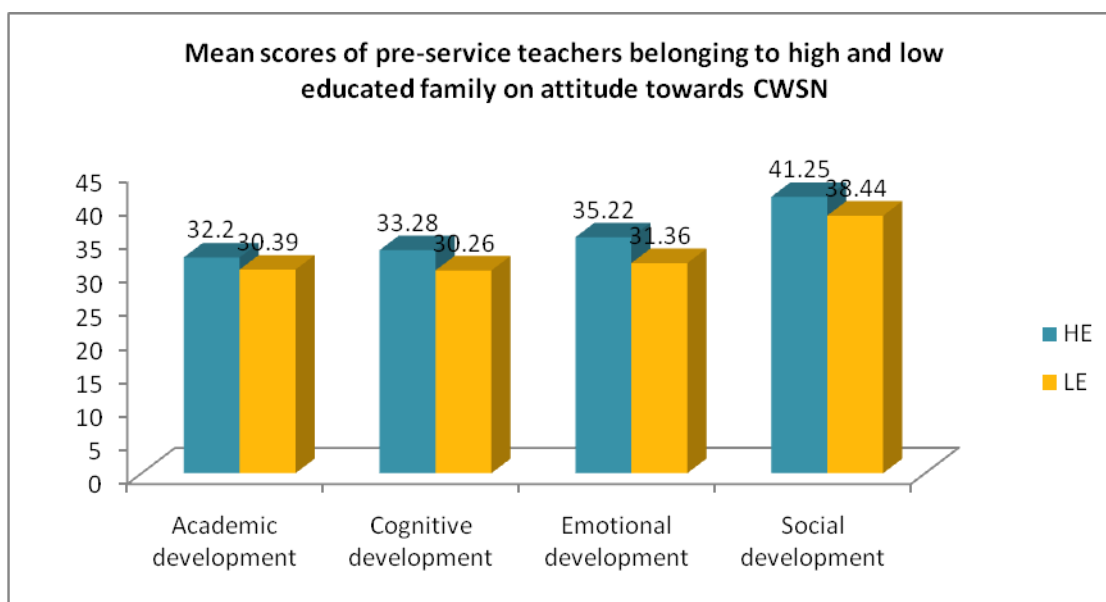
\* significant at .05 level

at .01 level =2.58

\*\* Significant at .01 level

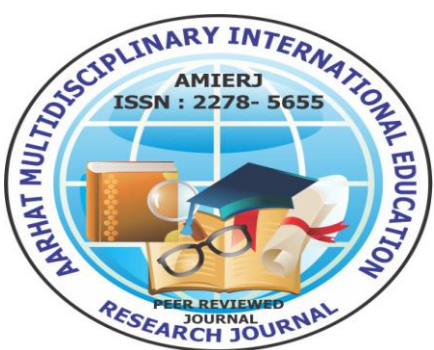
Table 3 and Fig.3 reveals that the mean scores on attitude towards various development of CWSN of pre-service teachers belonging to high educated family are greater than the low educated family. Further, there is statistically significant difference between the pre-service teachers belonging to high and low educated family on their attitude towards children with special needs. It indicates that teachers belonging to high educated family were better attitude towards academic, cognitive, emotional and social development of children with special needs.

*Fig-3*



## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to determine the attitude of pre-service teachers towards the different development (academic, cognitive, emotional and social) of students with special needs. Result of the study shows that pre-service teachers belonging to science stream had more positive attitude towards all the developmental aspects of students with disabilities than their arts stream counterparts. It indicates that pre-service teachers perceived that to educate disabled



students with normal peers is better educational strategy for effective development of students. This result was supported by the findings of Parua & Sharma, (2010) and Kumar (2012).

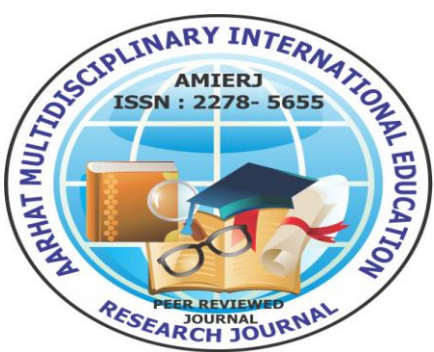
The findings of this study are consistent with the study by Gupta (2009) that found pre-service teachers belonging to high SES had more positive attitude towards inclusion than the low SES teachers. The result may be that pre-service teachers belonging to high SES were more awareness about the disability.

These results provided encouraging evidence that pre-service teachers belong to high educated family had more positive attitudes towards all the development of students with special needs. These results are meaningful because they show that pre-service teachers found the awareness and knowledge through mass media like TV, radio and newspaper and from their educated parents about disability problems. The findings of this study are consistent with the study by Singh (2012) reported improved attitudes toward students with exceptional learning needs when pre-service teachers exposed about disability.

In present time, education has to prepare children with disabilities not only academically but also socially, emotionally and in cognitive aspects to enable them to face the ever-changing world confidently. There is an inverse relationship between academic achievement and social development (Kumar, 2011) and academic achievement and emotional development (Kamboj, 2010)

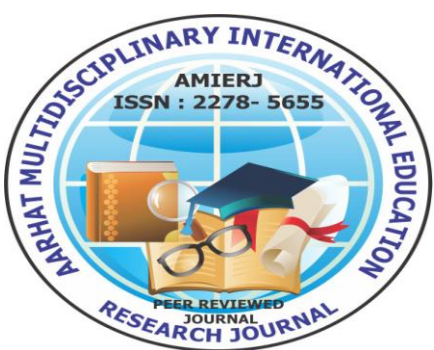
### **Future Studies**

The sample in this study includes only secondary education pre-service teachers who have belonged to high SES and high educated family. It would be useful to examine the demographic variables of pre-service teachers. It would be useful to compare attitudes of secondary and elementary pre-service teachers towards students with special needs.



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