CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the Study

Teaching is widely recognized as one of the most influential professions in society due to its fundamental role in shaping future generations. It is often referred to as the "mother of all professions" because it lays the foundation for all other careers (Darling-Hammond, 2000). The quality of education in any society is intrinsically tied to the quality, dedication, and motivation of its teachers. In this context, understanding the attitudes and motivational orientations of pre-service teachers the future torchbearers of education is of paramount importance.

A growing body of research suggests that positive attitudes and strong motivation among pre-service teachers are critical predictors of effective teaching and long-term retention in the profession (Klassen& Chiu, 2011). Yet, recent years have seen rising concerns over declining interest in the teaching profession among young people, particularly due to perceived low status, inadequate remuneration, and challenging working conditions (OECD, 2021; Ingersoll & Smith, 2003). These perceptions can dampen enthusiasm, reduce motivation, and contribute to high attrition rates during the early years of teaching.

Research by Watt and Richardson (2008) introduced the FIT-Choice model (Factors Influencing Teaching Choice), a widely used framework that integrates motivational factors with career choice theory. The model categorizes motivation into intrinsic values (e.g., interest in teaching, desire to make a social contribution), extrinsic values (e.g., job security, salary), and fallback career motives (e.g., choosing teaching due to lack of alternatives). Their findings reveal that intrinsic motives are generally stronger predictors of positive attitudes and long-term commitment to teaching, although extrinsic motives also play a significant role, especially in certain socio-economic settings.Pre-service teachers' attitudes and motivation towards teaching are shaped by a dynamic interplay of personal, institutional, and societal factors. These elements collectively influence their readiness, satisfaction, and persistence in the profession. In an era where educational systems globally are striving to improve teacher quality and reduce attrition, especially among early-career teachers, investigating these influencing factors is more urgent than ever. A thorough understanding of what drives and sustains pre-service teachers' passion and commitment to teaching can inform targeted interventions and reforms in teacher education.

In order to be considered one of the developed countries, a nation needs, first and foremost, to have a qualified workforce. Undoubtedly, achieving a human resource is believed to stem from having a well-established education system. Also, the educational system's success is rather closely linked to the quality of the teachers produced.

Teaching is often described as the "mother profession," because without teachers, no other profession can thrive. Despite its fundamental importance to society, teaching has been increasingly seen by many, especially younger generations, as a less desirable career path. Pre-service teachers—those who are currently in training to become educators—are at the heart of the future of education. Yet, an alarming trend has been observed globally and locally: a growing number of pre-service teachers are entering their programs with lukewarm attitudes and weak motivation, and many do not persist in the profession after graduation (Ingersoll, 2001; Watt & Richardson, 2008).

The issue is not simply that some individuals decide not to pursue teaching. Rather, it is the deeper concern that many who do enter teacher education programs may lack the strong commitment, confidence, or positive perception of the profession necessary to thrive in it. Some pre-service teachers report that they did not choose teaching as their first career choice but entered due to external pressures or limited options (Sinclair, 2008). Others cite low societal respect, insufficient salaries, work overload, and poor working conditions as demotivating factors—even before they officially start teaching (Kyriacou&Coulthard, 2000).

Moreover, the COVID-19 pandemic has added new dimensions to this issue. It disrupted traditional models of teaching and forced many pre-service teachers to learn in isolation, away from the classroom environments where passion and purpose are often sparked. For some, this led to greater resilience and creativity. For others, it widened the gap between theory and practice and made them question whether teaching is a viable or fulfilling career at all (König et al., 2020).

There is an urgent need to investigate the personal, institutional, and societal factors that shape pre-service teachers' attitudes and motivation. Without this understanding, interventions may be misdirected, and the education system could continue to lose capable, passionate teachers before they even begin.

The problem, therefore, is not only the declining interest in the teaching profession but also the complex interplay of emotional, social, and structural factors that influence pre-service teachers' willingness and enthusiasm to commit to it. Identifying and addressing these

factors is essential for strengthening teacher preparation programs, supporting future educators, and ultimately improving the quality and sustainability of education systems.

The attitudes pre-service teachers hold toward the teaching profession are critical. These attitudes influence how they approach their training, how they relate to students, and whether they will remain in the profession long term (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Positive attitudes can fuel enthusiasm, resilience, and commitment, while negative attitudes may lead to dissatisfaction, burnout, or even early exit from the profession (Hong, 2010).

In today's changing educational landscape marked by technological advancements, policy shifts, and increasing mental health challenges understanding the mindset of future educators is more important than ever. Teacher shortages in many countries, along with a declining interest in teaching as a career, further highlight the urgency of this issue (OECD, 2019). Why do some students embrace the idea of becoming teachers, while others hesitate? What beliefs and experiences shape their outlook? These are questions that need to be answered if we are to build stronger, more supportive, and more inspiring pathways into the profession.

By exploring pre-service teachers' attitudes, this study aims to give voice to those who are preparing to shape the next generation. It is a step toward understanding not just what future teachers know—but how they feel, what they value, and what they need to thrive.

1.1.1 Shaping the future : the importance of teacher development

Teachers don't just teach subjects—they shape lives. Behind every successful engineer, artist, scientist, or entrepreneur is a teacher who, at some point, sparked curiosity, encouraged growth, and nurtured resilience. And yet, before a person becomes a teacher, they are a learner—sometimes full of hope, sometimes full of doubt—navigating the path of teacher preparation. These individuals, known as pre-service teachers**,** are the future builders of classrooms, and their attitudes and motivation toward the profession are key predictors of how well they will teach, how long they will stay, and how much impact they will have (Watt & Richardson, 2008; Klassen& Chiu, 2011).

This study begins with those questions, and it aims to investigate the factors that influence pre-service teachers' attitudes and motivation toward choosing and staying committed to the teaching profession. Through their stories, beliefs, social environments, and institutional experiences, we hope to uncover not only what leads them into teaching, but also what might keep them there.

1.1.2 Emerging educators

A pre-service teacher is an individual who is enrolled in a formal teacher education program but has not yet achieved full certification or begun teaching independently. These individuals engage in coursework and often participate in field experiences, including practicum or student teaching, as part of their professional preparation. Pre-service teachers are in the formative phase of learning both the theoretical and practical aspects of teaching, developing their pedagogical content knowledge, teaching philosophies, and professional identities (Darling-Hammond, 2006; Feiman-Nemser, 2001).

1.1.3 Mindset of Teacher- in-training

The two psychological l pillars at the center of this research –Attitude and Motivation. Attitude is a complex construct that captures how people think and feel about something gand how they behave as a result. According to Eagly and Chaiken (1993), attitude is "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favour or disfavour " (p. 1). In simpler terms, it's the lens through which people view the world whether positive or negative.

For pre-service teachers, attitudes toward teaching may be shaped by a variety of inputs: childhood school experiences, influential teachers, social conversations about education, or even depictions of teaching in the media. These attitudes, in turn, influence decisions about whether to pursue teaching, how seriously to engage in training, and how committed they are likely to be to the profession (Richardson, 2003).

Motivation refers to the internal and external drivers that lead individuals to initiate and sustain behavior. In the educational context, motivation explains why someone chooses teaching in the first place, and what keeps them going during hard times.

Ryan and Deci (2000), in their Self-Determination Theory (SDT), draw a key distinction between intrinsic motivation (doing something because it is inherently interesting or enjoyable) and extrinsic motivation (doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, like a salary or job security). Both types can influence pre-service teachers in powerful ways.

For example:

- A student who grew up dreaming of helping children may be intrinsically motivated.
- Another who seeks stable employment may be driven by extrinsic rewards.

Motivation also impacts persistence, effort, creativity, and emotional well-being—all crucial in the teaching profession (Deci& Ryan, 1985; Watt & Richardson, 2007).

1.1.4 The global context: teaching in a changing world

Globally, education systems are under stress. Rapid technological changes, socioeconomic shifts, pandemics, and political pressures have placed new demands on schools—and by extension, teachers. Many countries report growing teacher shortages, especially in rural and high-needs areas (UNESCO, 2020). At the same time, surveys indicate declining interest in teaching among younger generations, due to concerns about workload, low pay, and limited career advancement (OECD, 2021).These trends raise an urgent question: Are we preparing and supporting our future teachers in the right ways? If we understand what inspires and sustains them, we can better design teacher education programs, policies, and support systems to meet their needs.Personal, Social, and Institutional Influences on Attitude and Motivation-The development of attitude and motivation among pre-service teachers does not occur in isolation. Multiple interrelated factors shape how individuals feel about teaching.

- **Personal Background and Experiences**

Many pre-service teachers enter education with vivid memories of their own schooling. According to Lortie (1975), the “apprenticeship of observation” means that future teachers spend years watching teachers from a student’s perspective, internalizing ideas about what teaching is or should be. If they had supportive, inspiring educators, they may develop a positive attitude. Conversely, negative experiences may create skepticism or ambivalence.

Other personal factors—such as family background, gender, culture, socioeconomic status, or life goals—also play a role. For instance, Fokkens-Bruinsma and Canrinus (2012) found that pre-service teachers’ family support, personal values, and prior academic success were significantly linked to their teaching motivation.

- **Social influence**

Social perception of teaching affects how pre-service teachers feel about their career choice. In cultures where teaching is highly respected, students may feel proud and motivated. In contrast, where the profession is undervalued, pre-service teachers may feel pressure to justify their choice.

Social expectations can be subtle but powerful. For instance, in some contexts, women may be channeled into teaching as a "gender-appropriate" profession, while men may face stigma for choosing early childhood education (Drudy, 2008).

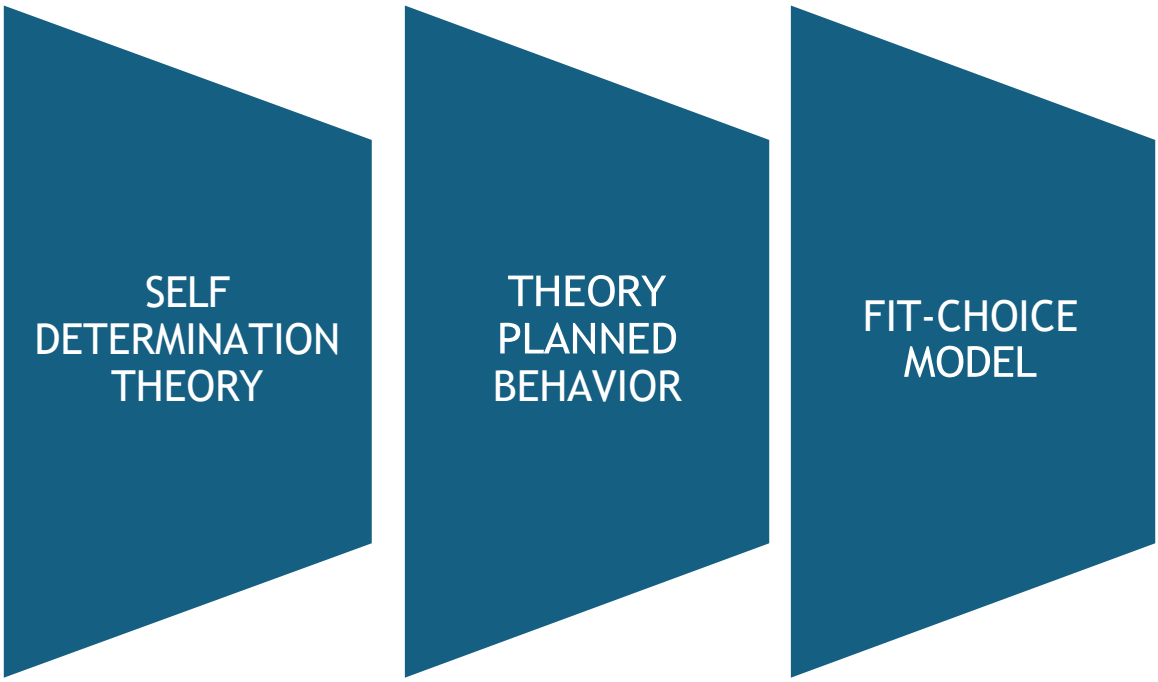
- **Institutional and Programmatic Factors**

Teacher education programs have a major role in shaping attitudes and motivation. Factors such as curriculum relevance, quality of instruction, practical experiences, mentorship, and feedback systems all influence how engaged pre-service teachers feel.

Hammernes et al. (2005) argue that well-structured programs that balance theory and practice, and that create reflective spaces, can significantly boost pre-service teachers' confidence and commitment.

1.2 Theoretical Framework: Making Sense of Human Motivation

A solid understanding of what influences pre-service teachers' motivation and attitudes requires theoretical grounding. This study draws on three key frameworks :



(Figure 1.1 Showing the 3 motivation Theories)

1.2.1 Self-determination theory (sdt)

Developed by Deci and Ryan (1985), SDT posits that people are most motivated when their basic psychological needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. Applied to pre-service teachers:

- Autonomy: Do they feel their career choice was freely made?
- Competence: Do they feel capable of succeeding in teaching?
- Relatedness: Do they feel supported by peers, mentors, and institutions?

1.2.2 Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB)

Ajzen's (1991) Theory of Planned Behavior suggests that attitudes, perceived norms, and perceived behavioral control shape intentions, which in turn predict behavior. For pre-service teachers, this means:

- Positive attitudes toward teaching → Stronger intention to enter/continue the profession.

1.2.3 Fit-choice model

Watt and Richardson (2007) developed the Factors Influencing Teaching Choice (FIT-Choice) framework, which categorizes motivational factors into:

- Intrinsic motivations (e.g., desire to work with children)
- Personal utility values (e.g., job security)
- Social utility values (e.g., making a difference)
- Fallback career motives (e.g., lack of alternatives)

The FIT-Choice model provides a nuanced lens for understanding the diverse motivations pre-service teachers bring to their programs.

1.3 Present-day scenario

In today's world, becoming a teacher is no longer simply a matter of passion or choice—it's shaped by a complex web of social, economic, and emotional factors. For pre-service teachers, the decision to pursue teaching and their attitude toward the profession are increasingly influenced by the realities they observe and experience during their training.

One major factor is societal perception. In many countries, teaching is still undervalued when compared to other professions. Despite its essential role in shaping future generations, teachers often feel underappreciated and underpaid. This disconnect between the value teachers provide and the recognition they receive can create doubt and disillusionment in the minds of pre-service teachers (OECD, 2019).

Economic considerations are also significant. Many pre-service teachers worry about the financial viability of a teaching career, especially when compared with other fields that offer higher salaries and better career advancement opportunities. The rising cost of living and student loan debts make financial security a key concern (Toropova et al., 2021).

In the post-pandemic era, pre-service teachers have also witnessed the increasing complexity of the teaching role. Remote learning, student mental health issues, and shifting curricula have added pressure to what was already a demanding job. Many pre-service teachers report anxiety about whether they are truly prepared for the multifaceted responsibilities of teaching today (Kim et al., 2022).

Another important factor is the quality of teacher education programs themselves. The kind of mentorship, classroom exposure, and practical training that pre-service teachers receive significantly shapes how they view the profession. Programs that provide hands-on experience, emotional support, and constructive feedback tend to foster more positive attitudes (Flores & Day, 2006).

Lastly, personal motivation and purpose still play a central role. Many pre-service teachers enter the field driven by a desire to make a difference, to inspire, or to give back to their communities. However, if that motivation is not nurtured through positive training experiences and supportive environments, it can be overshadowed by stress and uncertainty.

In short, the attitudes of pre-service teachers are being formed in a time of rapid change and uncertainty. Understanding the diverse factors at play—from societal values to institutional support—is essential if we are to prepare and retain passionate, capable, and resilient teachers for the future.

1.4 Role of government

The government plays a critical role in shaping the attitudes and motivation of pre-service teachers by influencing both structural conditions and perceptions of the teaching profession. Through its policies, funding decisions, and public discourse, the government acts as both a regulator and a motivator in the field of teacher education.

- **Policy Development and Implementation**

Government bodies are responsible for creating education policies that directly impact teacher training institutions, curriculum standards, practicum structures, and qualification requirements. When policies are supportive and inclusive, they help foster positive attitudes among future teachers. Conversely, inconsistent or poorly designed policies may lead to frustration and de-motivation (OECD, 2005).

Example: Mandating well-structured practicum programs and mentor support systems can enhance pre-service teachers' confidence and motivation.

- **Funding and Resource Allocation**

Adequate government funding ensures that teacher education programs have the resources, facilities, and personnel needed to provide quality training. Lack of financial support often results in overcrowded classrooms, outdated materials, and demoralized faculty—factors that negatively affect pre-service teachers' experience and enthusiasm (UNESCO, 2014).

- **Professional Status and Public Image**

Government officials and leaders influence how society views the teaching profession. When they publicly recognize teachers' contributions, offer career incentives, and implement fair compensation structures, it boosts the public image of teaching—which in turn uplifts pre-service teachers' morale (Sahlberg, 2011).

Example: National campaigns or Teacher's Day recognitions backed by government messaging can uplift the social prestige of the profession.

- **Scholarships and Financial Incentives**

Governments can also offer scholarships, stipends, and loan forgiveness programs for teacher trainees. These incentives are not only practical supports but also symbolic affirmations that teaching is a valued profession.

- **Regulation and Quality Assurance**

Through agencies or ministries, the government ensures that teacher education institutions maintain quality standards. These efforts help instill trust and pride in pre-service teachers about the profession they're entering.

1.5 Role of artificial intelligence (ai)

In the 21st-century educational landscape, Artificial Intelligence (AI)is becoming a transformative force—not just in how students learn, but also in how teachers are trained, evaluated, and supported. For pre-service teachers, AI presents both opportunities and challenges that can significantly influence their attitudes and motivation toward the teaching profession.

- **Enhancing teacher education through personalized learning**

AI-driven platforms can offer customized learning experiences for pre-service teachers. Intelligent tutoring systems, adaptive quizzes, and AI-based feedback tools allow trainees to learn at their own pace, address their weaknesses, and build competence with confidence (Luckin et al., 2016).

Impact: When pre-service teachers feel supported through personalized, real-time feedback, their motivation and self-efficacy often increase.

- **AI in Teaching Simulations and Virtual Classrooms**

Simulations powered by AI—such as virtual students or classroom management scenarios—enable pre-service teachers to practice real-life teaching skills in safe, controlled environments**.** These tools help build readiness, reduce anxiety, and enhance reflective practice (Dieker et al., 2014).

Example: Virtual avatars like "TeachLivE" or AI classroom simulations allow student teachers to rehearse managing disruptive behavior or delivering lessons.

- **Streamlining administrative burdens**

AI tools assist with grading, lesson planning, and progress tracking—tasks that often overwhelm teachers. Exposure to such tools during training can make pre-service teachers feel more prepared and less burdened, improving their attitude toward the profession's demands (Holmes et al., 2022).

- **AI as a Source of Inspiration or Intimidation**

While some pre-service teachers embrace AI as a helpful companion, others may fear it as a threat to job security or human connection. Concerns about AI replacing teachers or reducing the emotional and social elements of teaching can influence attitudes negatively (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019).

1.6 Rationale of the study

Teaching is more than just a job it's a calling that shapes minds, builds communities, and influences generations. But before someone becomes a teacher, they go through a journey of preparation. That journey begins in teacher education programs, where future educators pre-service teachers are not only learning how to teach but are also forming beliefs, values, and attitudes about the profession itself.

Why focus on their attitudes? Because what pre-service teachers believe about teaching deeply affects how they will teach, how committed they'll be, and whether they'll even stay in the profession long-term. A pre-service teacher who feels proud, motivated, and confident is more likely to become an inspiring and effective teacher. On the other hand, if they feel uncertain, undervalued, or unprepared, they may enter the classroom with hesitation—or leave the profession altogether within the first few years (Ingersoll & Smith, 2003).

This topic also matters in today's world, where many countries are facing teacher shortages and rising stress levels in the profession. Understanding what shapes pre-service teachers' attitudes can help us build better training programs, create more supportive learning environments, and ensure that we're not just filling classrooms, but empowering those who stand in front of them (Watt & Richardson, 2008). Their voices tell us what's working and what needs to change in teacher education.

Ultimately, studying pre-service teachers' attitudes is about investing in the future of education. Because when we support and believe in future teachers, we're also supporting and believing in every student they will someday teach.

In recent years, concerns about teacher attrition, declining interest in the profession, and burnout have prompted renewed interest in understanding what drives individuals to choose teaching—and, more importantly, what sustains them in it. A significant portion of early-career teacher attrition can be traced back to misaligned expectations and negative attitudes formed during teacher education (Hong, 2010). By examining the attitudes of pre-service teachers, this study aims to uncover the psychological, social, and contextual factors that influence how future educators perceive the profession.

In essence, this study serves both a diagnostic and developmental purpose: diagnosing existing challenges within the teacher preparation process and developing strategies to nurture more enthusiastic, resilient, and committed teachers.

1.7 Statement of the problem

The following study is entitled as :

"INVESTIGATING FACTORS INFLUENCING PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS ATTITUDE AND MOTIVATION TOWARDS TEACHING PROFESSION."

1.8 Significance of the study

The global teaching profession faces challenges such as teacher shortages, high attrition rates, and variability in teaching quality (Ingersoll, 2001; OECD, 2021). A growing body of research underscores that positive attitudes and strong motivation towards teaching among pre-service teachers can mitigate these issues by fostering resilience, job satisfaction, and professional commitment (Watt &Richardson, 2008). Therefore, investigating the factors that influence these attitudes and motivation is critical for teacher education institutions, policymakers, and educational stakeholders aiming to improve teacher preparation and retention.

By identifying key determinants, such as personal characteristics, institutional support, social status of teaching, and professional development opportunities, this study seeks to contribute to a comprehensive understanding of how to better support pre-service teachers. Enhancing their motivation and attitude could lead to more effective teaching practices and ultimately, improved student outcomes (Guskey,2002).Understanding pre-service teachers' attitudes toward the teaching profession is critically important for the development of

effective teacher education programs, sustainable educational systems, and the overall quality of teaching. Attitudes formed during the pre-service stage play a pivotal role in shaping future teaching practices, professional identity, and long-term commitment to the profession (Richardson & Watt, 2006). Positive attitudes are associated with higher levels of motivation, resilience, classroom effectiveness, and student engagement, while negative attitudes can lead to attrition, burnout, or disillusionment with the profession (Klassen& Chiu, 2011).

In many contexts, teaching is no longer viewed as an attractive career option, especially among high-achieving students, due to factors such as low salary, limited professional development opportunities, and a perceived lack of societal respect (OECD, 2019). Examining pre-service teachers' perceptions helps policymakers, curriculum designers, and educators identify the factors that either encourage or deter individuals from entering and remaining in the profession. Furthermore, this topic is especially important in the post-pandemic era, where teacher shortages and changig classroom dynamics demand a better understanding of how future teachers are prepared and supported.

By addressing the attitudes and motivations of pre-service teachers, educational stakeholders can better design interventions that improve teacher recruitment, retention, and performance, ultimately contributing to the quality and equity of education systems worldwide (UNESCO, 2023).

1.9 Objectives of the study

- To identify the factors influencing pre-service teachers' attitudes and motivations towards the teaching profession,
- To gain an in-depth understanding of their perspectives on teaching as a career, and
- To explore the challenges they encounter within the educational landscape.

1.10 Research questions

- What are the key factors that influence pre-service teachers' attitudes towards the teaching profession?
- What factors shape pre-service teachers' motivation to pursue teaching as a profession?
- How do pre-service teachers perceive the teaching profession and their prospective roles within it?
- What are the primary challenges faced by pre-service teachers during their teacher education journey?

1.11 Definition of key terms

Understanding the foundation of any research begins with clarity of its core terms. In this study, several key terms form the conceptual bedrock. These terms—such as pre-service teachers**,** attitude**,** motivation**,** and teaching profession are not just academic labels. They carry emotional, social, and practical significance that deeply influence how we interpret the findings.

- **Pre-service teachers**

Pre-service teachers refer to individuals who are currently enrolled in a teacher education program and are undergoing formal training before they begin their careers as professional educators.

In simpler terms, they are future teachers who are still in the process of learning what it means to teach—through coursework, field experiences, and practice teaching. According to Feiman-Nemser (2001, pre-service teachers "straddle the line between learner and professional," often negotiating their identity, confidence, and purpose as they transition from student to educator.

This phase is crucial because it is during this period that attitudes, beliefs, and motivations toward teaching are shaped and solidified (Korthagen et al., 2006). The experiences pre-service teachers have—whether empowering or discouraging—often determine whether they will enter the profession with passion or with doubt.

- **Attitude**

Attitude in this context refers to an individual's overall evaluation—positive, negative, or neutral—toward the teaching profession.

Attitude involves a blend of feelings, thoughts, and behavioral intentions. It is not fixed; rather, it is shaped by experiences, expectations, and context. Eagly and Chaiken (1993) define attitude as "a psychological tendency that is expressed by evaluating a particular entity with some degree of favor or disfavor." When applied to pre-service teachers, this means how they feel about teaching, what they think it involves, and whether they see it as something worth pursuing.

- **Motivation**

Motivation refers to the internal and external forces that influence a person's decision to become a teacher and to remain committed to the profession.

Motivation answers the "why" behind action. It's the driving force that keeps a pre-service teacher working late on a lesson plan, seeking feedback, or staying positive even when classroom management gets tough. Ryan and Deci (2000) classify motivation into two major types: intrinsic motivation, which comes from within (e.g., love for children, passion for learning), and extrinsic motivation, which comes from external rewards (e.g., salary, job stability).

- **Teaching Profession**

The teaching profession refers to the structured, ethical, and skilled practice of educating others, typically within institutional settings like schools.

But beyond the technical definition, teaching is a vocation, a career, and often, a calling. It involves not only delivering content but also shaping young minds, fostering curiosity, and building a more equitable society. According to Goodlad (1990), teaching is "a complex human activity that cannot be reduced to a set of mechanical tasks." This complexity means that entering the profession requires not only knowledge but also emotional intelligence, empathy, and a deep sense of purpose.

- **Influencing factors**

Influencing factors refer to the various internal and external conditions that shape pre-service teachers' attitudes and motivation toward teaching.

These factors can be personal (e.g., childhood experiences, academic background), institutional (e.g., quality of teacher training programs), or societal (e.g., public perception of teachers, cultural norms). Flores and Day (2006) highlight that teacher identity and motivation are influenced by "the interplay of personal biography and professional context." Recognizing these influencing factors helps researchers and policy makers identify where interventions are needed to support pre-service teachers effectively.

1.12 Delimitation of the study

1. The research focuses only on pre-service teachers enrolled in teacher education programs.

2. It examines selected factors as attitude , motivational, perception and their influence on pre-service teachers.

3. The study uses mixed-method approach and the data has been collected during a specific semester.