CHAPTER - I
INTRODUCTION

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1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Education is the process of developing the profound capacity to engage in experimental paradigmatic taxonomical transitivity that surrounds the acquisition and academic development along with efficacious independent practices and corrections. Bereft of analytical criticism education becomes a laborious process of open discourses and rebuttals; it entails a history of low status and paucity of attempts to rejuvenate the informational processing. Being one of the rendezvous it attempts to recollect the resource of stimulus repetition and a harmonious balance between the different phases of processing in the schemata of learning targets.

Contemporary trends in teacher education stress the need for teachers to adjust instruction to diverse contexts and learners, viewing teaching as a decision-making process, rather than focusing on the process-product paradigm of the transmission model of education (cited in Wach, 2015). Reflection is an active learning process from experiences and provides interconnectedness to a sense of sharing and a mutual bounding to common goals and shared values to enhance students capabilities for holding their energies and resources to the achievements of group of goals with a broad and balanced curriculum for all learners and for the specific needs of individuals and groups of students. Reflection and Reflective Practice are immensely used ideas in many fields of learning, training and professional development, including continuing and distance education and the professional preparation of teachers in higher education (Roessger, 2014). Drawing reflection in learning, the reflective practices can be adopted as a pedagogic approach in teacher education programme that develop students ability to think creatively and critically make informed decisions based on data and logic, access and analyse information to solve problems, communicate effectively, collaborate with others, and investing teaching energy in cognitive structures that help students learn how to learn and reflect on one’s own decisions and strive to improve personally and academically. Reflective cycle of learning and evaluation together with curriculum programmes of study to ensure all students who are engaged in relevant appropriate challenging tasks that enhance the academic capacities including organisation, comparison, categorising, and problem solving and structured thinking potentials and to extend beyond student reflection. Educationalists and psychologists have been attempting to analyze the
synergistic relationship of a hierarchical processing for interlocking the dynamics in reflective practices. Education is very important in helping us determine and shape our future, it does give us an upper hand over those who haven’t been much in school; but, without more effort we are no different (Armstrong, 2014).

Despite aberrations teachers explore patterns of transformation with the education of learners in schools have zealous duties and responsibilities to provide them with insights into how interventions can be arranged and conditions organised so as to educe, enhance and refine their intellectual resources for explicit temporal judgement for reflection.

Teacher education is a daunting prospect, from the start pre service teachers are entering a new and a very different professional world. The beginning teachers well undoubtedly develop a sense of identity and to get the novice teachers into reflective mode and it is worth starting with what they feel knowledgeable about in order to provide a practical frame work for their critical reflection.

The aspects of teaching that emerges out of this study have main concern to teacher education and reflective practices; that could be decorated with insightful contributions about the benefits and potentials of reflective practices for exploring and refining those unique cognitive qualities in practitioners which will need to be amplified to live productively in future. Alexander, VanWyk, and Bereng (2009) are of the opinion that the purpose of education involves the development of human capital towards meeting and achieving the individual and psycho-social needs of learners and communities. Nowadays teacher education programmes are under pressure to raise standards for admission and also increase the quality of field placements.

Darling – Hammond (2006) maintains that teachers must have the capacity to plan instruction so that it meets the needs of students and the demands of content; teachers are considered as ‘adaptable experts’ with the ability to assess learning difficulties and adapt materials, teaching strategies or supports accordingly. Applying this insight to teacher education, Cappello (2005) emphasizes the need for student teachers to develop their professional judgment as they must acquire the capacity to plan instruction designed to ensure success for a diverse student population.
In order to empower the learners to excel in effective processing and construction of knowledge, we need to develop and implement insightful instructional practices in teacher education programmes that cultivate reflective practices among teacher educands in their teaching learning process. Researchers suggest that teachers who engage in reflective practices do more than just practice a set of teaching behaviours (Dewey, 1933). They identify problems, analyse possibilities and find solutions, and provide educational experiences that meet the needs of diverse learners. Consideration is given to goals and objectives to be met, student responses to lessons learned, and the appropriateness of instructional strategies used. Reflection in teacher education has become a common practice since Schon (1987) highlighted the link between reflection and practice. Hence reflective practice is an essential component in helping pre-service teachers to learn from their experiences and grow as teachers (Rogers, 2011).

As it is neither inimical nor irrational reflective practice is, as much a state of mind as it is a set of activities for teachers to develop understanding of their work at all stages of their career. In this context, reflective practice is one of the best accountability measures for a teacher to synopsise massive accounts of information and to shape raw data on students and discussing thinking beget more thinking and communicate their thought process to others for making implicit problem solving process explicit. The general process of organising information require the learners go well beyond the retention of isolated bits of information and given the current tendency to question levels of teacher professionalism, and the tendency for policy and standards to stress performance, the models of reflective practice can offer teachers an opportunity to develop their professional identities and teaching practices within what can be a challenging working environment. Reflective process can act of self- deliberation in order to make sense of practice involving the previous experiences and contextual awareness. Moreover reflective practice is the capacity to reflect on action so as to engage in a process of continuous learning.

The aura of reflective practice is now so widespread across a range of professions that it has almost become clichéd. Yet it has the potential pathways for the production of knowledge which assist in developing students and teachers capacity for flexibility and viewing situations from multiple perspectives, as well as being able
to change and adapt based on feedback from others and it is to be a powerful support for professional learning and development. However not all modes of reflective practice are equally valuable, or equally sophisticated, and reflective practice has tended to become subsumed in to performance measures. Of course, care must be taken not to stereotype the role of the teacher as being either a critical reflective practitioner or a straightforward policy deliverer. The reality is more complex than that, and teachers’ roles most likely fall between these two paradigms. Teachers cannot choose simply to ignore government and local authority policy but, in asserting a claim to professional status, they must deliver this policy in a way that best enhances children’s opportunity for learning. Reflection is an active process of witnessing one’s own experience in order to take a closer look at it, sometimes to direct attention to it briefly, but often to explore it in greater depth (Amulya, 2011).

The notion of reflection and reflective practices is now established in a number of areas of professional education. Reflection of any genre takes the form of cumulative body of knowledge and is futuristic that it seeks to improve practice through an understanding of the relative success and failure of previous events, maximizing meaning making and self-evaluation; it remains connected to past focusing on completed stages. Learners are summoned to revise fundamentally or ordinary ways of conceiving experiences, and thus by expanding their vision and by accepting newer forms of thoughts based on past experiences. The reflective mindset is then able to grasp what it was incapable of grasping or accepting before; to be reflective means to wander mentally through where you have been and trying to make sense of it. When reflective practice has been identified as an important component of social science education, it provides learners with an opportunity to correct misconceptions and fill in gaps by helping them to think about what they are doing; how they are doing and why they are doing it. Thus it refines their thinking, improves their thoughts, addresses the roots of their beliefs and assumption and transforms their practices that facilitates the unbriddled generation of ideas and promotes organisational and analytical structuring of information.

In short many researchers of education argue that reflective process is an approach to generate students’ capacity to gather information, process or elaborate that information into conceptual relationships, and then apply and evaluate to the
reflective activities of student practitioners to enable a greater range of thinking, judgement, communication and reflection. Jennifer et al. (2006) have reiterated that engaging in reflection prove beneficial not only for students but also for teachers. The time and effort invested in reflection yield a harvest of greater student learning, higher teacher morale, enhanced feelings of efficacy and a more collaborative professional community.

Reflection is essentially helpful in solving complex tasks, because it helps learners to identify facts and formulate theories that are relevant for the solution of an ill-defined problem (King & Kicthner, 1994). People can understand themselves, their work or others which seems to be related to thinking and to learning (Dewey, 1933; Moon, 1999). Engaging in reflective practice shows commitment to ongoing professional development; it enables student teachers to examine their practice, which in turn benefits their future work. Reflective practice, now a common inclusion in many social science education programs, help student teachers to think about what happened, why it happened, and what else could have been done to reach their goals (Cruickshank & Applegate, 1981).

Devoid of reflective practices, teaching becomes a mechanical process that eclipses natural wisdom; it may seem raw and rustic or unsuitable for the so called civilized existences of the present day world. But reflective practice is a way of practicing that helps to mould the future teachers and to develop students’ capacities for continuous self analysis, self monitoring, self reinforcing, self evaluation and self modification. Another interpretation views that the apparent failure of teacher education to promote reflective teaching as fewer programmes and institutional contexts; but more a problem of pre-service teacher readiness. The work of some researchers who have examined the developmental stages, beginning teachers pass through suggests that, attempts to encourage reflection during the pre-service years are misguided (Kagan, 1992). Therefore, the present study selects the innovative teaching strategies such as, journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing for promoting reflection among the prospective teachers at secondary level.

Emerging trends in educational practices, instructional strategies and approaches are to be experienced in the learning circle that integrates the creative
dynamism of practices, the analytical structures of content-specific learning and the continuous cognitive development and reflections fostered through different strategies for promoting reflective practices. In this stance, the investigator selected the innovative strategies namely; journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing as a foundation for facilitating various skills such as collaboration, critical judgement, questioning, self reinforcing and continuous self analysis for directly improving teachers instruction and students performance for transforming their static information into active knowledge.

Distorted, incomplete, half-hearted education imparted by disgruntled teachers who have many axes to grind, does not have lasting value. In order to develop curiosity, creativity, critical thinking, and journal writing ability in learners without any bias and to find out reasons in the proper perspective should be the aim of teaching social science in the fast growing world. Promoting the ability to think and writing the journal entries is not unique to social science education. All curriculum areas claim that they contribute to the development and sharpening of critical thinking skills and writing the journals. But it is social science, which must carry the main responsibility for encouraging students to think critically and creatively about day to day public and social issues and other concerns of the society.

Journal writing is a strategy that makes invisible thoughts concretised and the product was formulated as a beautiful descriptive piece of writing that sequencing the ideas into a deeper level to create a new foundation for rigorous learning, higher order systemic thinking, and facilitate assessment in classrooms. Journal writing provides means of describing practice and identifying and clarifying beliefs, perspectives, challenges and hopes for practice. It is also a learning tool based on the ideas that students write to learn and they use the journals to write about topics of personal interest, and to note their observations that help to imagine with things they actually know. Reflective journals encourage their knowledge construction by comparing theory with practice through experiences in real classrooms (Lee, 2008).

In pre-service education the student teachers so keep journal as a part of self-evaluation, and they transform their information into a creative product that facilitate diverse learners who require differentiated instruction, multiple intelligences, habits
of mind and higher order thinking. Work by Loughran (2002) and others (e.g. Richert, 1992; Sparks-Langer & Colton, 1991) have validated the significance of teachers constantly engaging in inquiries about their own practices through the reflective process. Reflective journal writing is a strategic evidence of reflective thinking and involves a description of an issue or experience as well as an exploration or critical analysis and explanation of events. A growing self-awareness and professional improvement both seem to be a natural part of journal keeping (Brock, Yu & Wong, 1992). Journals are useful tools not only for understanding the highlighted factors that pre-service teachers reflect on, but also to provide a rich source of data to understand how pre-service teachers improve personally and create reflection on their practice. Thus, journaling is a process where occur knowledge creation and knowledge transfer in future to divert the tracking of the children from rote learning classrooms which may ultimately dooms them to an educational underclass. So the students are to be empowered and to reach in the main stream of learning practices through journal writing that support learners in filtering, organising and systematically assessing raw slices of information.

Likewise the above strategy critical incidents in teaching is an approach in building reflection on student teachers and bring about transformations in student performances and offer a pathway for long term development of their thinking abilities. To enhance the development of strong beliefs linked to real world practice, pre service teachers should reflect on their initial experiences to improve their instructional strategies and to achieve professional growth (Walkington, 2005). Anders, Hoffman, and Duffy (2000) found that there were no instances of critical discourse, as defined, aimed at teachers across three settings. They concluded that pre service teachers’ reflection did not improve with practice and merely engaging in the act of reflection tended to result is a socialization of the practice with little movement toward higher order thinking.

In this paradigm, teachers have to face the greatest confront of adapting education for harmonizing the rapid shift of the modern society. One method of encouraging the student teachers to reflect on their teaching is to have them analyze critical incidents that occur while they are teaching (Farrell, 2004). A critical incident in teaching is a strategy to dealing with the perceptions of student’s thinking and
classroom performance. In teaching, the incidents are created where the incidents happen all the time in classrooms that can be connected to information and transform that information into new kind of knowledge. Richards (2001) suggested that by reflecting on incidents in a formal manner, social science teachers can uncover new understandings taken for granted perceptions of the teaching learning process. Formal reflection on critical incidents consists of a description and production phase followed by an explanation phase (Tripp, 1993). The incident is then explained by the instructor in terms of its symbol, value or role. Reflection in teaching refers to teachers subjecting their beliefs and practices of teaching to a critical analysis of teaching and learning (Farrell, 2013).

There are many opportunities to explore the critical incidents from the classroom practices and facilitating thinking skills that can be easily transferred to students across disciplines to enrich the quality of instruction and learning. In the prevailing curriculum transaction modes many teachers still talk, while students passively listen and they get ambiguous information and unstable knowledge and a condition of feeling passive classrooms. Whereas there is adopting the strategy, critical incidents the pupil becomes live and have a large impact on student learning and promote their cognitive skills as categorising and comparing the issues through analytical thinking modes that requires the development of their metacognitive behaviours in classrooms. An incident can appear to be typical rather than critical at first sight, but really only becomes critical through analysis (Tripp, 1993). It is also interesting to note that many of the critical incidents reported by the student teachers seemed to focus exclusively on negative rather than positive issues regarding the teaching and learning of social science. The use of critical incidents as a simulation technique that forces the students to discourses in classroom set up and explore various factors; and facilitate full range of habits of mind and meditate these habits to make creative thinking and problem solving. Thus they are removing the fundamental barriers to improve students’ reflective thinking and teaching capacities to convey basic and complex content based and conceptual learning for all students.

In this technological era, reflection can be a highly effective way to enhance the quality of teaching and learning. A constructivist perspective on knowledge and learning is common to most portfolio use in teacher education (Mc Laughlin & Vogt,
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A portfolio is a purposeful collection of student work that are individualised and self selected that exhibits the students’ progress, or achievements in one or more areas. The collection must include student’s participation in selecting subject matter, the criteria for judging merit, and evidence of the student’s self-reflection. Reflection is an important component of portfolio assessment because it requires students to think about their development as writers and encourage personal reflection on the process of learning. A portfolio has been defined as a purposeful integrated collection of student work showing effort, progress or a degree of proficiency (Burkey, 2009).

The strategy, portfolio writing offers a direct pathways from lower order applications, from higher order thinking and from remembering content information to transforming those information into conceptual understandings and being able to map out and record transitional sentences in their documenting to envisioning and planning students for capturing new world requiring self knowledge. A teaching portfolio is a collection of information about a teacher’s practice and it provides a means for reflecting on and critiquing one's work. Portfolios encourage both personal and professional development through the process of reflective practice and critical analysis.

As far as students are concerned, portfolio offers a chance to see progress over the course of the practice and enables them to participate in collaborative learning that it entails a responsive and constructivist approach to teaching and learning. It can also reveal their strengths, accomplishments, and mastery of the major goals and learning outcomes that structure the social science education. Moreover, the portfolio provides each practitioner a compilation of his or her best works. For social science education each group of portfolios provides direct measures of student performance, of student perception (self-assessment) of performance, and an opportunity to compare the goals and outcome expectations. These trends are openly discussed and each practitioner considers possible changes, corrections or other responses to improve the reflective practices for social science education. When reflection is part of the planning and delivery process, teachers can identify their strength and weaknesses, and thus make adjustments to better performance. It also implies that teachers become active knowledge producers as they continually learn to address their problems of practice,
they encounter to meet the unpredictable learning needs of all of their students (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

Effective instructional strategies which take into account the needs of the learners are prerequisite for an efficient learning and teaching atmosphere and their investigating represent internal, mental, flexible, quickly changing and highly generative patterns that integrates a wide range of cognitive inquiry into a new framework for conceptualising experience and action. As such Social studies should be part of the school curriculum, that enhances the capacity to construct students knowledge production for chunking information and developing concepts and have the direct impact to apply past knowledge to new situations in the cycle of classroom learning.

Moreover social science is a body of knowledge and thought pertaining to human affairs and constructing representation of knowledge, communicating and negotiating meanings, assessing and reinforcing the shifting terrain of interrelate knowledge for gaining new perspectives and insight in everyday life. As curriculum frame workers and policymakers move forward with the implementation of the common core, which facilitate proper patterns of thinking and how they help the students to make sense of the world and become lifespan learners. It is important to ensure that schools have the freedom to balance instruction and assessment of the outcomes with a high-quality curriculum, in social science classes especially.

In order to come up with ways to enhance reflection for schematic processing and internalisation of the reflective practices among teacher educands of social science at secondary level, they are required to internalise the effective strategies and they must be empowered to transform information into active, meaningful knowledge for deeper learning. In this stance, the present study finally aligned with the different strategies and adopts the select instructional strategies namely; journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing for promoting reflective practices in social science pre service teachers’ reflection.

1.2 NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

A proliferation of research centres on the needs of a nation with accountability issues and diverse student population; we need explicit teaching and sufficient
practice to decode the various components of reflective practices in classrooms as a specific instruction in developing curricular objectives in social science. As teaching is a dynamic and highly skilled activity; it unfolds a world of knowledge and information, experience and evaluation, creative and critical appreciation to peers devoted in teacher education. In this stance, teacher educands at secondary level need more advanced practical orientation and directed to carry out certain classes as per schedule and to engage in specific teaching as a dynamic process not only in selfless recapitulation of another’s thinking and feeling, but a deeper sense of linkage and interpretation to the opened doorways to constructivist view of learning and pedagogy. Teacher educators are therefore intimately related to effectiveness of teaching and as such the avenues of innovative teaching and strategies adopted for that purpose necessitated orientation and reorientation with changing needs and priorities in the programme of teacher education. The ability to reflect on one’s learning and to learn from reflecting on experience is a fundamental skill for learning and decision making (Bell et al., 2010).

The prospective teachers are to be equipped so as to enable them to perform successfully in the pre-instructional, instructional and post-instructional phase of teaching. Teacher education curriculum and evaluation process with the aim of developing certain strategies for reflective practices are often seen to lay great emphasis upon reflection that includes thinking, deductive reasoning, and meta cognition about teaching. Teaching is believed to embody far more than the technical; it requires contemplation and imagination, caring and empathy, thoughtfulness, discernment, and along with cognition and emotion. Within this coverage, pre-service teachers tend to understand more about the teaching and learning process by questioning their initial experiences to improve their instructional strategies and to achieve professional growth (Walkington, 2005).

Based on the views and practices of the prospective teachers, teacher education plays a crucial role in the preparation of teachers not only enhancing their understanding but also establishing the academic achievements that need in instructional practices. The most important step in this direction is to build appropriate practices and supplement it to the regular classroom instruction and underpins new approaches to teaching and learning that contribute to a continuing
enrichment of curriculum for professional studies and to develop the student teachers understanding of reflection as a critical activity. Reflective practice is a dynamic development process to prepare beginning teachers for initial practices and as an educational approach for all professionals to examine both non critical and critical incidents and begin to learn professional inquiry. Thus reflective practice provides a way of examining personal experience of student practitioners and to examine the values that underpin their academic performances both scholastic and non scholastic.

Being a reflective practitioner, teachers examine the interpretive assumptions that involves a constant critical look at teaching and learning and to develop the sorts of skills and attributes for deeper reflection to explore more critically the underlying assumptions in their teaching practices and to build the understanding of learning and teaching for enhancing the reservoir of knowledge. Reflective practice is mainly based on the assumptions that, increased awareness of one’s professional performance can result in considerable improvement of performance specially, reflection on teaching has been advocated by many as a means to question teaching and learning, evaluate in order to bring one’s curriculum transaction modalities to a conscious level, and to interpret the consequences of one’s actions, and to conceptualize alternative teaching actions.

Kolb (1984) in his model of the experiential learning cycle regards the process of reflecting upon experience as a critical stage - ‘experience without reflection does not lead to learning.’ Brown and Mc Cartney (1999) point out that reflection on both the content and the process of learning help learners move towards and stay within a deep approach to learning. The competence of pre service teachers during their field based experience facilitate self-awareness and enhance professional growth by integrating knowledge and practices.

Teachers can provide many of the critical elements that support reflective practice, opportunities for interaction, shared reflection and modelling for reflective practice (Grimmett & Erickson, 1988). Clearly, the efficient teachers use strategies such as giving descriptive feedback, posing questions, soliciting feedback and opinions, and listening actively in discourses that facilitate the development of teacher’s and their students reflection.
In the prevailing instructional modes of social science education, teachers confront specific difficulties in their classroom practices to transform the earmarked curriculum objectives. To overcome these difficulties it is strongly recommended that the beginning teachers have to adopt the reflective practice approach that in which there is provision to the evaluation of teaching and learning strategies and classroom resources and they concentrate in their efforts on finding the most practical and efficient means to solve problems by utilising the various skills and of practices such as exploring, classifying, interpreting, analytical thinking and critical evaluation, and reasoning and testing through the sequential process of reflective thinking and generating the students cognitive skills and capacitate the knowledge to make higher level of reflection in their regular classroom practices.

It is necessary to revitalise social science teaching through reflective practices that are critically reflect on the technical aspects of their teaching and set impact more meaningful educational experience to access their thinking that might enrich the quality of instructional strategies. Moreover the process of learning should promote the spirit of inquiry and creativity on both children and teachers that enables the prospective teachers to reflect on their performance and identify the points of strength and weakness to find ways of tapping the theories of professional acquisition. Being able to describe or even inquire about what they have or what they lack helps them understand how they are limited by their mechanical reflection to the objects of their lives (Pascal, 1996).

Thus it is through reflective practice, the teachers can begin to tease out the different types of theories and to instil the confidence into the individuals self directed model and to generate a sense of awareness which is an essential tool for teachers’ reflection and it is central to develop the reflective practices. In focusing on beginning teachers’ practices the teacher educators can adopt a constructive approach in teaching and learning that provide bridge between feelings and realities and can open up questions about experiences. It is worth noting that the process of describing new professional assumption theories in teacher education programmes with reflective practices that is essential to meet the specific needs of the students’ classroom action planning and provides a useful framing device to conceptualise the elements of
professional learning with deliberate judgement in a more analytical way and designed to make hidden knowledge more explicit.

As the contexts for professional practice, new teachers will be expected to be the part of collective decision making rather than making autonomous decisions in the classroom for productive reflection that leads to interventions, into creative activities for constructing and reconstructing the pedagogical approaches to all stages of curriculum transaction including initial teacher education. To encourage critical reflection, the student practitioners should engage in collaborative analysis with discourse and identify the range of possible solutions to the embedded dilemmas and it to the theoretical knowledge with practice.

In order to explore the practical aspects of reflective practices, the student practitioner should develop the skills and attributes such as observation, communication, judgement and strategic competence and they are the key components of reflective practices. Focusing on self reflection the beginning teachers have to develop the skills of judgement through the critical analysis to boost up their self confidence and to express thoughts and feelings to become more self aware and reflective to promote analysis and self evaluation at a deeper level.

In addition to develop the competence in beginning teachers they are to be provided the opportunity to introduce new types of learning devices in classroom practices and to create new insights into learning practices. To achieve this aim the innovative reflective teaching strategies have to be adopted in classroom practices and designed to produce practical results and to make a strategic change in their practices. Thus the investigator was inspired and adopted the strategies namely journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing for promoting reflective practices among teacher educands at secondary level.

These instructional strategies lead quite naturally and consciously to the understandings that every student may create different mental scenes based on his or her prior knowledge and multiple frames of reference for conceptualising and transform the knowledge. Further more teachers who identify closely with the instructional practices with the cognitive views of expertises and learning with more reflective and discursive identities through an ongoing professional inquiry with their
practices and adopt new stances which respond to their learners difficulties and seek to collaborate with learners and colleagues. It supports to develop the novice teachers’ identities that are more rooted in reflective, discursive collaborative ways of working and that allow teachers to be more deliberate in their actions.

On the serious pitfalls with the idea of reflective practices, the strategy Journal writing is provided for shared knowledge and collaborative learning by enabling the teachers and beginning teachers to make insight in their critical reflection. Journal writing can be used as one of the most dominant approaches which clearly strengthen their personal thoughts and self reflection and it promotes reflectivity by activating the thinking and awareness of student teachers about the way they teach. Moreover journal writing help them as it is a useful tool not only for understanding the projected features that the teacher educands reflect on, but also to provide a rich source of data to understand how they improve personally and can plan ways of getting to know each student better and to adapting the curriculum to meet their specific needs.

Focus on responding to the diversity of students’ strength and needs as teaching concern, journal writing provides a freedom to the individual and groups to change the operation of the social environment at the level of their personal experiences and can reflect on the various methods of learning and teaching. The teachers can evaluate the impacts of students’ learning. During the process of journal writing the reflective practitioner can analyse and attempts to reveal more about the nature of expertise within the professional setting and judgements that create a powerful learning episode for their pupils. In short journal writing strategy explore and organise their thoughts into more systematic reflections and is linked to other reflective activities such as group discussions and classroom observation and looking for patterns to obtain more insights into their beliefs and attitudes to make more informed choices about their practices.

Because of the students’ unique and diverse learning challenges, the practitioners must carefully examine the potential curriculum programmes for the acquisition of various skills for the development of professional standards in teaching. In this stance teachers can adopt critical incidents in teaching as a new strategy to interrogate their versions of events that fosters critical thinking and self evaluation in
students for critical reflection. Tripp (1993) claimed that as a teaching strategy critical incident appear to be typical rather than critical at first, but are rendered critical through analysis. Critical incidents can be either positive or negative; they are usually experiences that make one consider the events that have happened to try to give them some sorts of meaning (Hannigan, 2001). Using a critical incident as a way of reflecting helps individual students to identify practice that has been helpful or unhelpful in a situation.

Reflective practice is used to promote the dispositions of the teacher educators and developing their classroom practices and awareness of the learners with the critical incidents as a way to foster reflective thinking including multiple intelligence, accelerated learning and thinking skills in students for reflectivity in teaching. Teachers offer several frameworks or mental models to foster reflection by using the critical incidents in classroom practice. Such frameworks are helpful to articulate newcomers of the reflective practices in guiding intentional reflective experiences and develop their own ways of prompting inquiry and seek variety of activities such as observation, questioning, collaborative discourse and skills of decision making to explore the individual capacities to reach the feasible conclusions of the issues provided.

In many areas of education, portfolio has been making a significant role to promote critical judgement and thus enhancing the level of performance in students as an element of self evaluation for logging evidence to self reflection and strengthen their competence in practices. Portfolio writing is the purposeful collection of student work and assessment and it is used as summative development for accreditation purposes. The use of portfolio assessment as a comprehensive assessment tool, it reflects on an understanding of the natures of teaching and learning as a way of capturing the complexities in teaching to promote reflective practices. The portfolios also stretch the acquisition of skills through increased organisation and planning efforts by fostering in social science teacher educands. Furthermore the use of portfolio is widely recognised in professional education as a powerful tool for monitoring personal and professional development. It is to be recognised that portfolio is not a one-time snapshot of where the teacher carefully collected and recorded the learning experiences, thoughts and goals. Ultimately collecting and
assembling of all the materials for their portfolios, student teachers must reflect and evaluate their current and future teaching plans for the development of reflective practices.

There are number of eminent writers and researchers who have contributed to the complex thinking that surrounds reflective practices. This is why the educational policy makers and curriculum planners would encourage the student teachers to employ different learning activities like collaborative learning, critical analysis and self evaluation and implement the practical levels of reflective practices in teacher education programme. Reflective practice is an introspective process of examining one’s own teaching behaviours (Barr, Somers, Ghere, & Montie, 2006). As a practitioner, the investigator strongly feels that to provide more activities to the students for developing their various skills such as predicting, inferring, interpreting, sequencing and summarising and the like to revise the instructional modes and to supplement programmes to correct the deficit areas of the students’ academic needs. Though a few studies have been conducted in this area, with comprehensive analysis of the different studies undertaken and it necessitates investigating this area. In this juncture, the investigator felt the need of the study.

So the investigator made an attempt to examine the prevailing curriculum transaction modes of social science education and develop certain strategies for promoting reflective practices.

Within this context, the investigator put forward the following research questions.

1. How much the tresses of reflective practice proficiency have been possessed by the teacher educands to design their knowledge grid that enhances their capabilities?

2. How can the students at secondary schools be equipped to explore new ways of learning social science through reflective engagement?

3. What kinds of reflective teaching strategies have the greatest potential to act upon student’s cognitive encounters and emotional orientations in social science task engagement?
4. How the select instructional frame works are affected in attaining a reflective mindset, subsequently intensifying the varied tresses of social science teaching proficiency among teacher educands at secondary level?

1.3 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Teachers may be, practicing teachers and teachers enrolled in pre service or in-service programmes; and it can also be beginners and student teachers. The focus of the study is on reflective practices that are as a dynamic development processes in initial teacher education to exercise originality of thinking and critical judgement and to develop professional values and practice to support professional learning and development. Educational administrators also can reflect on their personal stances and understanding of teacher development and reflective practices to encourage their teachers to use the strategies as part of their professional development. Keeping these views on the investigator’s mind and based on the research questions formulated, the present study is entitled as DEVELOPING CERTAIN STRATEGIES FOR PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICES AMONG TEACHER EDUCANDS AT SECONDARY LEVEL.

1.4 DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Developing

In the present study developing means the preparation and testing of reflective teaching strategies and to bring about the capabilities to the evaluation of the curriculum transaction.

Strategies

Strategy is a careful plan as method; a clever stratagem; the art of devising or employing plans or stratagems toward a goal; (an adaptation or complex of adaptation as of behaviour, metabolism or structure) that serves or appears to serve in important function in achieving evolutionary success (Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary, 2009).

The strategies that develop reflective practices as one of the key ways to offer teachers an opportunity to develop their professional identities and teaching practices and promote thinking in learners in a systematic, scientific process of probing
experience, in articulating questions that come out of experience, in generating hypotheses which include considering source outside oneself, and in taking intelligent action to test hypotheses. It is a construction of an individual or ‘bottom up’ view of teaching which involves observation, collection, and evaluation of data (Helen, Nick, & Miram, 2009).

In the present study, the term implies powering up a reflective mindset in teachers to use the magnetic resonance imaging as a seeker of connections that provides a hook for the new learning and taps in to the prior knowledge of the students and the student practitioners are provided opportunities to articulate, explore, formulate and reformulate their ideas through different modes of inquiry, investigation, judgement, research and analysis. The innovative teaching strategies proposed in the study comprising of journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing respectively.

**Reflective practices**

Reflective practices are a process of inquiry in which teachers knowing in action and is continually constructed and reconstructed in practice of teaching as a dynamic developmental process in initial teacher education. It is attributed to identify and analyse problems and situations, critically consider contextually and pedagogical factors, use a rational problem solving approach, make intuitive, creative interpretations and judgments, create a strong systematic and reflective thinking and constantly review instructional goals, methods and materials. Reflective practice has emerged as an approach to teacher education whereby pre service teachers are asked innovate and think about their attitudes, beliefs and assumptions, and to use reflection as means to promote self evaluation and change (Sudharma, 2013).

Reflective practice is defined in a most recent literature as a vehicle through which one can improve his practices by thinking and rethinking on that own experiences. Reflective practice means that teachers must subject their own beliefs of teaching and learning to a critical analysis, by articulating and comparing these beliefs to their actual classroom practices to see if there are any contradictions between practice and underlying beliefs (Farrell, 2013).
For the present study the term reflective practices refers to the intellectually disposed form of teaching where in the prospective practitioners deliberately and purposefully orchestrate to think and to frame and reframe the practices from eventfulness of experiences through inner dialogues, critical exploration, discourses, probe evidence, explain perspectives, investigate implications and consequences, exposition of patterns of meaning and to determine a solution from a new point provide appropriate structure for student performance and feedback with oneself and with others for promoting an innovative mind set ensuing the development of the ability to be self-monitoring, self-directive autonomous and to have sense ownership of their teaching.

**Teacher Educands**

The teacher educands enrolled for one year pre-service teacher education programme in Kerala and are eligible to teach students at secondary level (Std. VIII to X). The teacher educands in the present study were the students from various colleges of teacher education (B.Ed. Colleges) in Kerala.

### 1.5 HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study

1. Most of the teacher educands at secondary level are deficient with regard to the attainment of the set levels of reflective practices in social science education.

2. The select strategies for curriculum transaction like journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing are superior to the prevailing activity oriented modes in promoting the reflective practices of teacher educands in social science at secondary level.

3. There exists significant difference between the sub samples of teacher educands at secondary level with reference to the competency based on:

   (i) gender and (ii) locale of institution

3 (i) The gender wise classification indicates that the male teacher educands at secondary level show better competency on reflective practices than
their female counterparts when exposed to the select teaching strategies.

3 (ii) The teacher educands of colleges of teacher education at secondary level in urban area will show better competence in reflective practices than their counterparts in rural area when exposed to the select teaching strategies.

1.6 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives formulated for the study are:

1. To identify the prevailing modes of institutional practices and the respective constraints experienced by teacher education programmes in social science at secondary level with special reference to the enhancement of reflective practices.

2. To find out the self-worthiness of teacher educands at secondary level in accommodating the prominent componential elements of reflective practices.

3. To develop the select strategies namely; Journal writing, Critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing for promoting reflective practices among teacher educands at secondary level.

4. To test the effectiveness of the select strategies viz. Journal writing, critical incidents in teaching, and portfolio writing for promoting reflective practices among teacher educands at secondary level.

5. To compare the effect of each select strategies for promoting reflective practices among teacher educands at secondary level based on sub samples
   a. Gender: Male and Female
   b. Locale: Rural and Urban

6. To analyze qualitatively the efficacy of the select strategies by internalizing reflectivity among teacher educands at secondary level.
1.7 METHODOLOGY IN BRIEF

The present study tried to propounds an alternate means of intensifying the pedagogical approach as reflective practices among teacher educands at secondary level through the adaptation of certain reflective teaching strategies namely; journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing. In order to attain the research goal, before quantitative and qualitative approaches were adopted in this study. The experimental study was carried out by adopting the pre-test, post-test non-equivalent group design. The study also sought to determine the efficacy of the select strategies through the adoption of the semi structured interview and self assessment rubrics.

Sample selected

The sample of the study comprised of 256 teacher educands at secondary level from 8 Colleges of Teacher Education coming under three districts in central Travancore of Kerala namely; Kollam, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta. A select sample of teachers consisting of experts in education, teacher educators, and teachers at school and college levels were also included in the purview of the study.

Investigative supports and exploratory techniques

1. Interview schedule (semi structured)
2. Self-assessment rubric
3. Lesson design for journal writing
4. Lesson design for critical incidents in teaching
5. Lesson design for portfolio writing
6. Judgment schedule for lesson designs
7. Competence assessment test for Teacher educands
8. Evaluation proforma for student teachers
9. Responsive interviewing on case basis
Introduction

Statistical Techniques used

The statistical techniques employed for the research study at hand are

1. Test of significance of difference between means
2. Analysis of co-variance (ANCOVA) and ANOVA
3. Descriptive statistics (Percentage computation)

1.8 SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study primarily focused on developing certain strategies that would enrich structural reflection or dialogue with oneself, peers and tutors in a multiple meaning context and thereby inspiring the individuals to make reflection. The select teaching strategies can serve numerous purposes such as examining patterns of reflective thinking, documentary learning, and support information. Likewise the select strategies such as journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing enables them to develop their cognitive structures like self evaluation, critical judgement, problem solving, analytical thinking and decision making for reflection in their practices.

The findings of the study can equip teacher educators, school practitioners and teacher educands at secondary level in adopting the approach reflective practices in teacher education programme in future. It is hoped that the curriculum framers and policy makers would compulsorily incorporate mode of reflective practices in the syllabus for enriching the teacher education. The findings would serve in ensuring that student gain the resilience and creativity, they need to continue to be lifelong learners. Though the introduction of the select strategies and the pedagogical approaches like reflective practices poses practical and political challenges to the existing statuesque, it has the potential to transform knowledge and learning by significantly increasing motivation for learning by fostering individual progress and by enhancing 1) collaborative learning, 2) learner independence, and 3) confidence in articulating intentions through the adoption of suitable reflective activities and modes of expression.
1.9 DELIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is delimited to social science education for promoting reflective practices only and some defining components have been taken in the account as they are endorsed to incorporate the entire ambit of competence of reflective practices of an individual. The sample of study has been restricted to the districts of central Travancore namely; Kollam, Alappuzha and Pathanamthitta as they represent a cross section of teacher educands enrolled for the pre service teacher education programme in the state of Kerala. Three reflective strategies were designed only considered for the study; they are journal writing, critical incidents in teaching and portfolio writing. The focus is majorly on the three select strategies owes to their specific pattern of developing skills of social science tasks, generating thoughts and creative expressions, critical judgements and the discourse patterns. In order to re-conceptualize the extent of competence attained for the smooth classroom interaction based on the performance of teacher educands, the test primarily focused on assessing the reflection on instructional practices of teacher educands at secondary level.

1.10 ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

The present study is organized as follows.

Chapter 1 - Introduction

This chapter presents a brief introduction of the study, need and significances of the study, statement of the problem, definition of key terms, hypotheses, objectives of the study, methodology in brief and scope and limitations of the study.

Chapter 2 - Theoretical Overview

The chapter presents the theoretical background of the study conducted.

Chapter 3 - Review of Related Literature

This chapter has been discussed on various studies and articles related to the study.

Chapter 4 - Methodology

The procedure of the study adopted mixed methods that comprising of both the quantitative and qualitative methodology discussed in this chapter.
Chapter 5 - Analysis and Interpretation of Data

The details of statistical analysis and the qualitative analysis done in this study with sufficient interpretation are given in this chapter.

Chapter 6 - Summary and Conclusions

Summary of the findings and conclusions including implications, recommendations and limitations of the study are discussed here.