CONCLUSION
In the context of this study, an attempt has been made to examine and highlight the problems and prospects of agrarian reforms in Russia during the transition from a command economy to a market economy. The reform in agriculture is essentially a part of the overall economic reforms that have been introduced to establish a market economy in Russia. The agrarian transformation in Russia in the 1990s has not achieved the goals that were initially set. Most agricultural enterprises are unprofitable and are not oriented towards the market, the market infrastructure is poorly developed, and the agrarian policy that is being pursued does not meet contemporary requirements. The modest results of reforms have resulted from a series of economic, legal, political and psychological factors.

The continued economic decline in the sector is hindering the appearance of incentives for the real market transformations of agricultural producers, and is being aggravated by the contradictory and incomplete nature of prevailing legislation. The pursuit of agrarian reform is also being held back by prejudices and negative attitudes in rural areas towards entrepreneurship that were inherited from Soviet times. Furthermore, many rural inhabitants have not been able to adapt quickly to the new conditions. The absence of unity in society regarding the directions of the reforms and their ultimate aims distinguishes Russia from the countries of Central and Eastern Europe. It also limits the opportunities for reforming the agrarian sector.

This research work undertook the task to assess the process and various dimensions of agrarian reforms in Russia. Since agriculture in Russia has passed through periodic reforms and reorganisation, historical facts play an important role in the contemporary agrarian reforms.
The most important development that has taken place during the transition is creation of a mixed agrarian economy. Though the reorganisation of collective and state farms was practically complete by the beginning of 1994, but a major part of these farms have only been cosmetically changed. This reorganisation has not resulted in better efficiency and higher outputs or any other positive results. Though the status and names of the collective and the state farms are changed, many of them have been operating on the same scale as they were in the USSR.

The creation of autonomous farm (peasant farms) became stagnant after an initial increase in the early period of the transition. But the positive result is that the size of the farms has been increasing towards the end of this decade. Some of these farms have become founders of large commercial structures, and set-up modern agro-industrial companies, but their number is very negligible. These farms managed to adapt to the new economic conditions and between 1992-1994, they embraced market economy in agriculture, and could become finest examples for the enterprising private peasant farms in the countryside. These farms have been able to cope with the new external parameters and the mechanism of the new economic environment, which, in fact, showing better management of their resources and efficiency in production.

Due to extremely high taxes, exorbitant prices for agricultural equipment, fuels and other resources, violation of owners' rights, low subsidies from the state, allotment of low quality lands to the private farmers and their distance from the cities and market places, lack of roads, other communications and transportation have caused the stagnation and withdrawal of peasant farms from the business. Besides, some inherent subjective causes- lack of experience in independent economic activity, lack of knowledge and unpreparedness of farmers to work under economic and
social risk contributed largely to the failure of the emergence of a private peasant farm sector.

The development of part-time farms or the household farms (subsidiary farms) were rather promoted by the existing order of taxation (very low or negligible for PTF), due to their non-official and non-formal nature in the production structure. Regarding the transformation of the part-time farms to private peasant farms, there lies a great apprehension among the peasants that the transformation of PTF from the non-formal sector to a formal one would involve a variety of heavy tax pressure and cease of aid from their base collective enterprises.

The lack of land reforms and the viable land market has to a large extent hindered the creation of a market type farm structure, both individual and cooperative in spite of the Russian government’s attempts on land reforms and the creation of a land market. General land reform, adopted by the Supreme Soviet of Russian Federation in 1990, guaranteed land ownership in Russia. Farm enterprises and individuals were allowed to lease the land from the state or hold it in inheritable tenure, though the purchase and sale of land was not allowed. The Russian Federation Land Code of 1991, which significantly expanded the earlier agrarian reforms, put a historical barrier on the sale and purchase of land, a 10-year moratorium. This remained an obstacle throughout the transition, though many presidential decrees and laws have been attempted to pass the Land Code, and at large, failed to achieve the end.

There is no single model through which the land can be distributed among the present farmers. Restitution, the normal and most viable model of redistribution of land among the East European and Central European transition countries, has been made practically impossible in Russia due to a long history of socialisation of land.
So, the question of how to redistribute the land and to whom, has become a practical difficulty. This put a break on the privatisation of land and other means of production in agriculture. The redistribution of rights from the state to the farm members therefore was less far-reaching than the reforms initiated in the CEECs, but far more significant than the sheer formality of re-registration, a reform criticised at the time as superficial.

However, without an arable land market, prevented by the moratorium, due to the cumbersome process of disposing of land and other assets, the stagnation of the farm sector was not relieved by out-migration to other sectors. Indeed, although the market for agricultural land was blocked, markets for other kinds of land, for example, subsidiary plots, expanded rapidly, and small vegetable farming was encouraged.

It is understood that under the present macro-economic conditions and the historical background of agriculture in Russia, former collective and state farms find innumerable difficulties for a systemic transformation. The base of communal farming still lies very much in the mindset of the peasants. So, the reforms should also take initiative to break the impasse to overcome the hurdles of this psychological factor.

It is believed that government in cooperation with private capital or on its own has to have a foot in financing the agrarian system. During the transition, this was necessary to create a predictable stable economic environment. Peasants are used to dealing with the government, and they know that the state is a stable entity. They do not have the same experiences with the new, mushrooming private banks, which in Russia are heavily involved in land-market operations and supposed to solve the financing problems of the agrarian sector.
Traditionally, the majority of decisions regarding the product and technology mix on agricultural enterprises were taken elsewhere by the various levels of the administration. During the transition, although there has been some deregulation of agricultural production, the administrative infrastructure continue to hold a lot of the strings, particularly when it comes to the allocation of inputs such as fuel, credit, seeds, breeding stocks, market information and so on.

The development of market structures and the various institutions for forward and backward linkages, other economic apparatus are still in search of alternatives. Privatisation though has been one of the main objectives of the reform, has hardly able to emerge as an alternative to the old and now fading apparatus. Agriculture has suffered for being left without an economic mechanism and institutional and other infrastructural support. The emergence of a market driven agriculture in Russia has been in search of ways and means. The existing system is not adequate to help create a viable market driven agriculture. For, Russia needs the privatisation of basic economic apparatus to help the new and emergent private peasant farmers and the reorganised cooperatives.

If the state apparatus continues to operate in command-and-control mode, a large number of potential economic agents at the bottom of the hierarchy are at best irrelevant, and probably counterproductive. In other words, the question is not only the creation of potential decision-makers, but also the provision of an environment in which they can make decisions, experiment and innovate.

The nature of agricultural production makes a degree of stability in policy even more important than other branches. Agricultural production is heavily reliant on natural processes, and it takes time for natural processes to operate. Gestation
periods and growing seasons mean that production can not be continuously adjusted in response to changes in economic signals.

The stability of the policy environment is also a prerequisite for the sustainable agricultural practices.

For the above perspective, the lack of unanimity among the various constituencies is to the objectives of the 'reform' process in agriculture is a major stumbling block. Without a consensus regarding objectives, it is easy to keep an endless debate alive, and impossible to move on to the subsequent and more important second question, namely 'how do we get there from here'.

Russia's agriculture continues to produce a narrow range of poor quality foodstuffs using the intensive and hence high-cost production strategies appropriate during the Soviet period. Agricultural producers are bewildered by post-Perestroika changes in their terms of trade, their reduced access to subsidies, loss of protection from imports and uncertainty regarding the ongoing policy environment. The bureaucracy, that was successively expanded in a futile and increasingly desperate attempt to drop up the sector during the Soviet period, is for the most part, a reluctant participant in the reform process which entails a dramatic redefinition of its role and orientation.

Hence for the purpose of this research, the reform process can be defined as subsuming any and all initiatives that assist the sector move away from the current situation toward the realisation of the objectives specified above.

The workings of a market economy puzzles most Russians; hence they are in a position to assess the damage, but not the potential benefits inherent in extending meaningful market reforms to agriculture.
Popular misconceptions are prevailing in Russia, about the operation of market economy agriculture. The economics of market economy agriculture, of the state is particularly baffling. The role of government intervention in market economy agriculture is generally misunderstood.

The market sector in Russia is still fragile and has not grown up to accommodate competition, where buyers and sellers act according to the principles of demand and supply. The reorganised collective and state farms have not yet been able to assess the various market channels. Once the producers see the benefits of product differentiation and their obvious categorisation by the consumers, competition would take place. But the just formal character of the reorganised collective farms and their production behaviour lacks a vision of the market and the inherent benefits. Competition and free market in the agro-sphere is still remote to both the buyers and sellers. The incentive to the producers for higher profit and choices for the consumers can only be brought into act if free competition is allowed in the new market system. The government should take initiatives to coordinate the upstream and downstream sectors to the various newly emerging market linkages. The success of reorganised collective-state farms lies there in the accessibility to the market.

Various lessons can be learnt from other transition countries both in Europe and Asia with a careful scrutiny of their stages of development and reforms. If Chinese example has anything to do with the Russian agrarian reforms is the lesson of decollectivization without denationalization of land, which is still a great debate in Russia and elsewhere. In fact after 10 years of the start of reforms Russia's attempt at privatization failed to achieve desired success. So it seems better for Russian government to look for the Chinese alternatives. But this does not necessarily mean
the creation of a household responsibility system in Russia. Rather Russia should create conditions for the promotion of enterprising private farmers and establishment of genuine cooperatives with reorientation to the market economic conditions.

The observation of other transition economies also provides some important lessons for Russia. In case of East Germany, it is found that family farms are technically more efficient than large-scale farm organisations, but only in certain specialisations and only in the beginning of transition. But after a certain time it is no longer found a significant difference between family farms and large-scale farms for both livestock and crop production. With institutional restructuring and liberalisation of the external environment, the gap in efficiency has disappeared during transition for all specializations. Given the market conditions and institutional support both the family farms and genuine co-operatives would work efficiently.

In case of Vietnam, it is evident that during the early stages of transition the wealthy peasants were swallowing up the small private farms. So adequate state protection and regulations should be there to protect the interests of the newly created peasant farms during the early phase of transition.

From the experience of European transition countries as a whole, it has been signalled that both the private and genuine co-operatives can work in the new market conditions if they are properly reoriented and reorganised with a viable support system initially from the government, during the transition. If we categorically take the example of Poland and Hungary both show similar results of agricultural enterprise, befitting them to market conditions provided there in. Though in Poland exist a viable private farm sector, which has adapted to the
market conditions and established themselves as new market oriented producers. At the same time, some genuine co-operatives are also created during the process of reorganisation based on voluntary participation and co-operation, which in fact are working far better efficiently than the old collective farms. The Hungarian agriculture is still dominated by the large-scale enterprises, which also during the process of reforms have adapted to the new conditions and are working with better efficiency than their old counterparts.

These observations raise the question as to whether private, collective agriculture is, in fact, a viable ‘middle ground’ option, which adequately reflects the role of historical and psychological factors in the Russian context. It is true, the transition from a command economy to a market economy is not an easy process. During the process and from the experiences of the other transition countries, it is observed that agriculture needs to adapt itself to the new economic conditions, and reorient the structural and functional aspects of the newly emerging private as well as the large-scale farms. The large-scale farms should be transformed to genuine cooperatives with proper reorientation from within and outside the structure.

So, Russia’s market reform in agriculture has to do a lot to create the institutions of private, productive relations based on market principles of demand and supply. The most important one in creating a private economic market oriented agricultural sector lies with the land reforms, land market development and institutionalisation of property rights, which Russia is lagging behind even after a decade of transition. The production relations and the new farm structure can only come into being when there exists a viable land market and other support services for agriculture during this transition.
Notwithstanding, the sharp deterioration in the terms of trade, the agricultural sector remains the subject of a vast array of punitive taxes. Laws and decrees designed to mitigate these burdens are on the books, but largely ignored. The prevailing attitude to the agricultural sector remains much as it was during the Soviet period. One way or another the urban industrial complex is going to confiscate any economic value generated in the rural economy.

It is observed that there were too many changes in the agrarian system of Russia since the emancipation of serfdom in 1861. Stolypin's reforms of 1906 were followed by War Communism (1918-1921), by the New Economic Policy (1921-29), forced collectivization (1929-35) also called by many as second serfdom, Khrushchev's reforms, Brezhnev's anti reforms, Gorbachev's reforms and the current wave of agrarian restructuring. The aim, objectives and methods of these policies were highly contradictory. Ideology played a greater role than natural and economic factors in Soviet agriculture.

The conclusion that the subsequent decades in history confirmed that the peasants were never the owners of the results of their work. The present reforms initiated by Gorbachev and led by Yeltsin in Russia is an attempt to create an efficient agricultural sector with a free peasantry and creation of conditions for the freedom of action and choices about their fundamental economic behaviour.

Historical experience shows that definite transition periods are essential for the pursuit of economic reforms that entail fundamental changes in the socio-economic system, the duration of which depends on the initial socio-economic conditions and the extent of the transformations. A gradual replacement of the planned/distributive system with a market system is occurring in the agrarian sector in Russia today. It is clear that any radical administrative measures to accelerate the
agrarian transformations sidelining the formation of their social base and not
differentiated by social groups are rife with negative consequences.

A person who has long lived in bondage does not adapt to freedom and free labour
all at once. Socialisation and subjugation of agriculture and the peasantry were not
created overnight, so their departure and adaptation to a new economic
environment can not be made over night. A long transition is a must, during which
reformation and adaptation would go through a process of trial and error till it finds
a stable and viable alternative, and in that sense Russia’s reform measures are
proving right.