

Missing Girls in North East India: An Analysis

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Abstract-The much talked fact of missing girls in the society is not restricted to the North Western region of India only, rather North Eastern region (states comprises of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim) slowly but certainly has experienced a declining trend in Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) and Child Sex Ratio (CSR) in the last two decades. This paper analyses the recent trends in SRB and CSR with a concern for increasing number of missing girls in the North East states of India.

Keywords: North East India, SRB, CSR, missing girls.

I. INTRODUCTION

In a recent report of United Nations Population Fund-India (UNPF-India, July, 2014) in collaboration with the Office of the Registrar General of India (ORGI), it is shown that Child Sex Ratio (CSR) has been changed dramatically within 1991-2011 in India. In general, more boys are born than the girls; boys outnumber girls everywhere in the world. The normal Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB), calculated as the number of girls born for every 1000 boys born. The estimate has been derived indirectly through a demographic technique of 'reverse survival' using the 0-6 age group and is termed as 'Implied Sex Ratio at Birth' (ISR). However, discriminatory practice like gender biased sex selection as a result of deep-seated patriarchal mindsets favouring sons over daughters, and ill-use of advance medical technology before birth or neglect of girls after birth forcibly skews SRB as well as CSR, measured as the number of girls per 1000 boys in the age group 0-6, in favour of boys. Kaur (2013) has stated that the rapid fertility declines in India through two-child norm and the technology of sex determination have contributed to the birth of fewer girls. Such imbalances certainly have negative socio-demographic consequences leading to finally, subordination of women in the society (UNPF-India, 2014). According to census of India, 2011 data, there are 37.3 million excess males than

females in India. The CSR has declined from 927 girls per 1000 boys in 2001 to 918 in 2011. Wide variations are observed in different states of India. 13 states and union territories have CSR lower than the national average (918). Highest CSR has been found in Arunachal Pradesh and lowest in Haryana (834).

The perturbing fact is not confined to the North Western region only rather North Eastern region (states comprises of Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Manipur, Nagaland, Tripura and Sikkim) have also registered declining trend in recent time.

In this paper an effort has been made to analyse the recent trends in SRB and CSR with a concern for increasing number of missing girls in the North East states of India. The study has significance in demography related study.

II. MATERIALS AND METHOD

The study is based on secondary sources. Annual report on vital statistics of India based on the Civil Registration System-2012, Office of the Registrar General, India and UNPF-India 2014 report are the major data sources. Quantitative methods have been applied for the data analysis purposes and are presented using Microsoft Office Excel 2007.

registered during the year divided by number of male births registered during the year and multiplies with 1000. Variations have also observed in the state level. In 2012, Meghalaya, Mizoram, Sikkim and Tripura have registered high SRB than the national average. Fluctuations have been observed in Assam, Arunachal Pradesh, Manipur and Nagaland throughout the period (2003-2012). (Fig.1).

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. TRENDS IN SEX RATIO AT BIRTH (SRB) BASED ON REGISTERED EVENTS, IN NORTH EAST STATES OF INDIA (2003-2012)

SRB measurement is the most authentic in demography related study. It is calculated as; number of female births

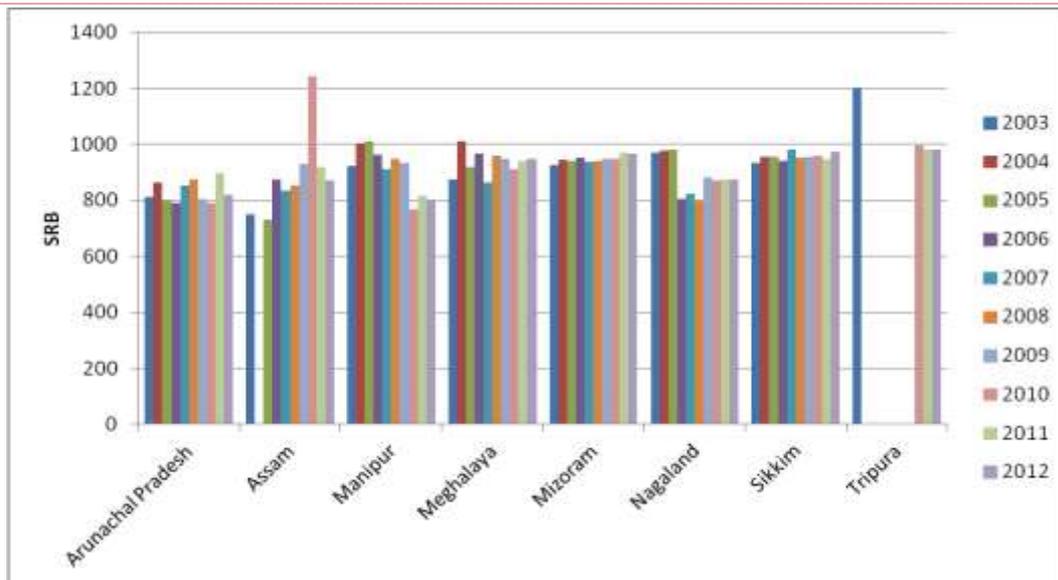


Fig. 1: Sex Ratio at Birth (SRB) based on registered events, 2003-2012; Source: Authors

B. DISTRICT-WISE VARIATIONS IN SRB IN NORTH EAST STATES, 2011

Wide variations in SRB have been observed in district level. In Assam, lowest score has obtained by Kokrajhar district (713) whereas Dibrugarh scored the highest value of 1016 (Fig. 2). In Meghalaya, Ri Bhoi scored the lowest value of 886 and East Khasi Hills scored the highest value of 984 (Fig.3). In Arunachal Pradesh, Tirap scored the lowest value of 658 and Upper Siang scored the highest number 1024 (Fig.4). In Mizoram, though all the districts have high score than the national average, Serchhip has the lowest value of

924 whereas, Kolasib has the highest value of 1020 (Fig.5). In Manipur, much wider variations have been observed. Bishnupur scored the lowest value (600) whereas, Churachandpur scored the highest value 1500 (Fig.6). In Nagaland, Kiphire scored the lowest ever value of 479, whereas, Tuensang scored the highest value of 959 (Fig.7). In Sikkim, high overall SRB has been estimated. East district has the lowest value (948) and North district has the highest value of 1097 (Fig.8). In Tripura, West Tripura district scored the lowest value of 800, whereas, Dhalai scored highest value of 1561 (Fig.9).

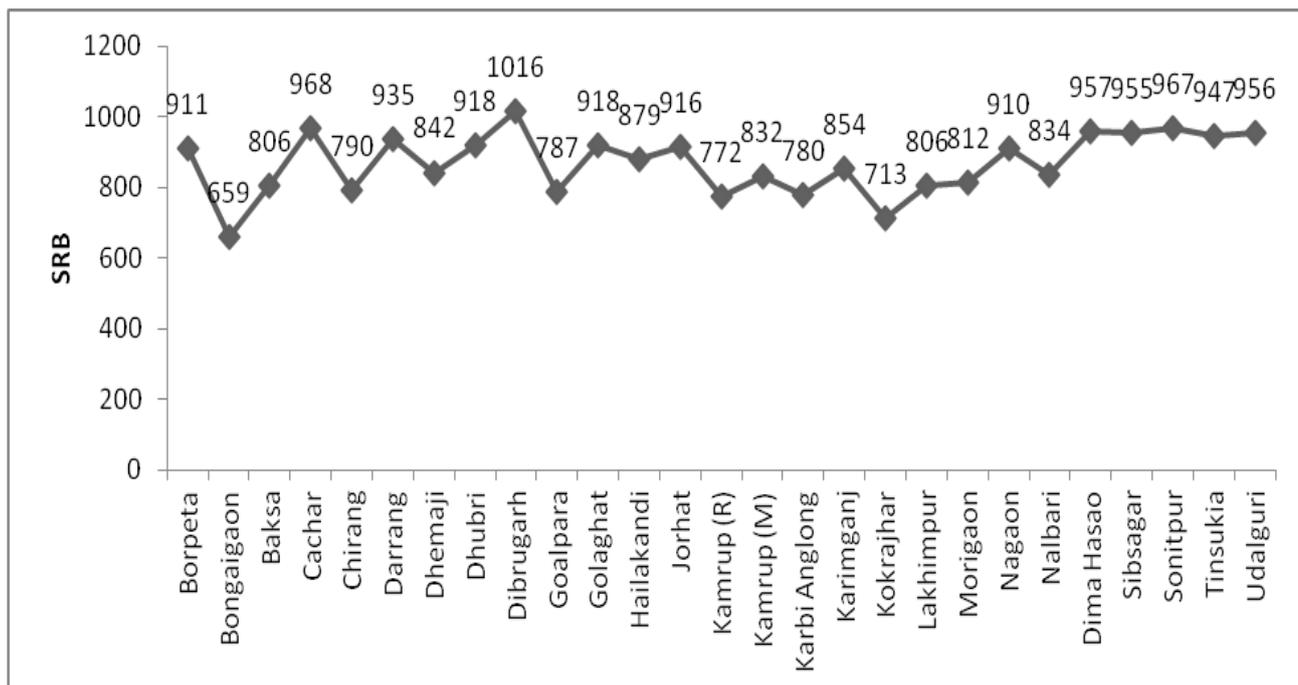


Fig.2: District wise variations in SRB in Assam, 2011; Source: Authors

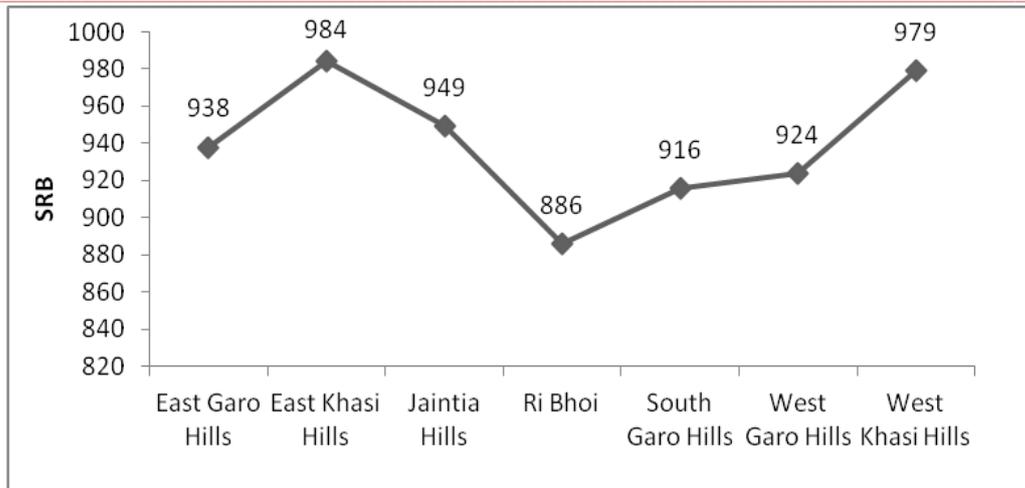


Fig.3: District wise variations in SRB in Meghalaya, 2011; Source: Authors

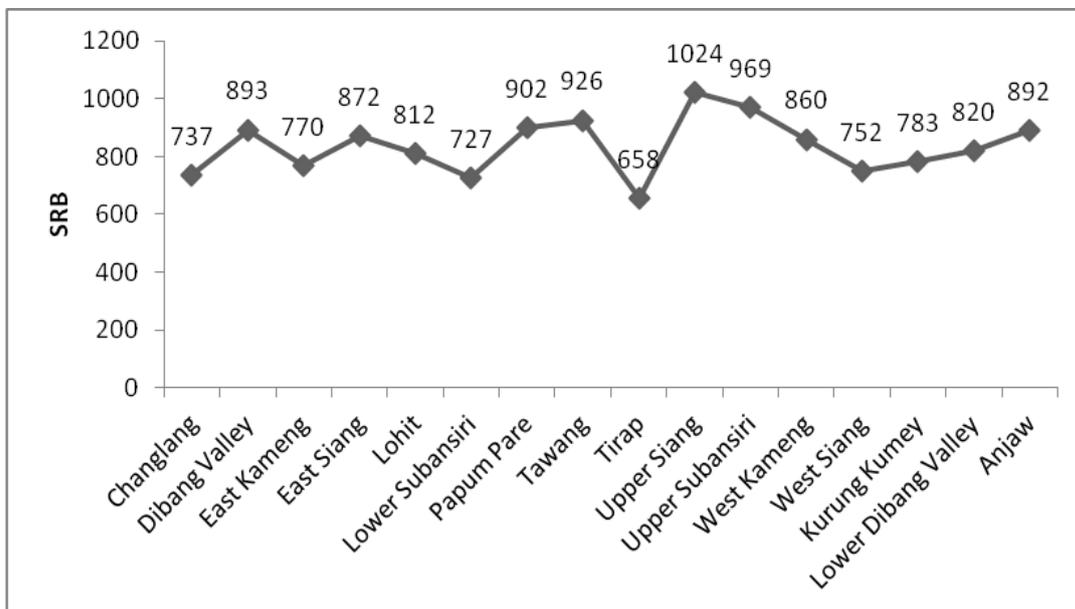


Fig.4: District wise variations in SRB in Arunachal Pradesh, 2011; Source: Authors

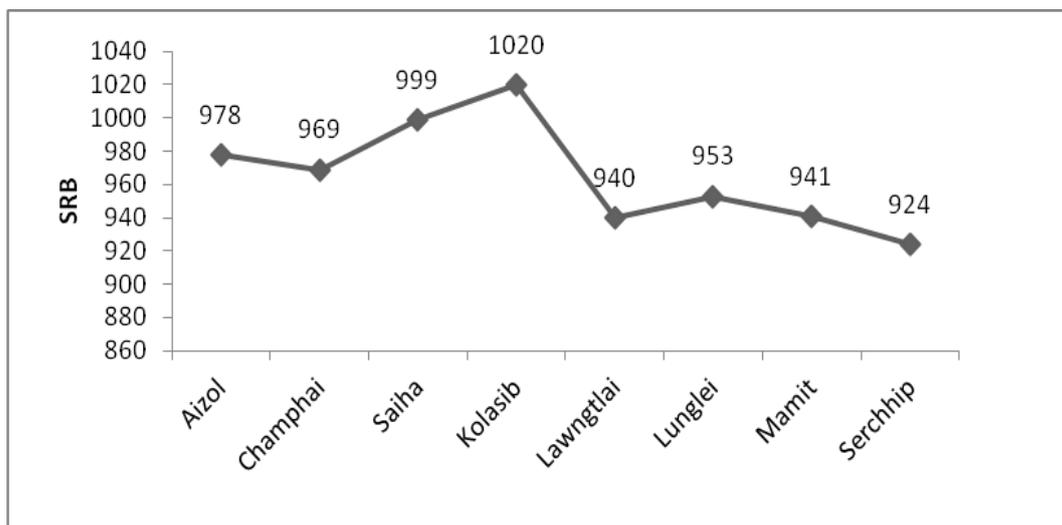


Fig.5: District wise variations in SRB in Mizoram, 2011; Source: Authors

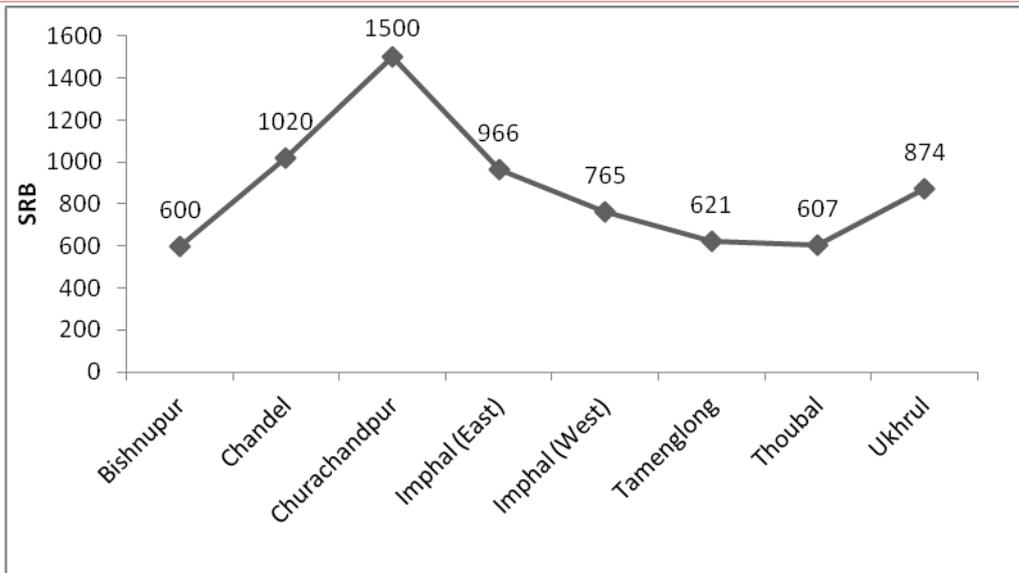


Fig.6: District wise variations in SRB in Manipur, 2011; Source: Authors;
Note: SRB data of Senapati district is not available in the census

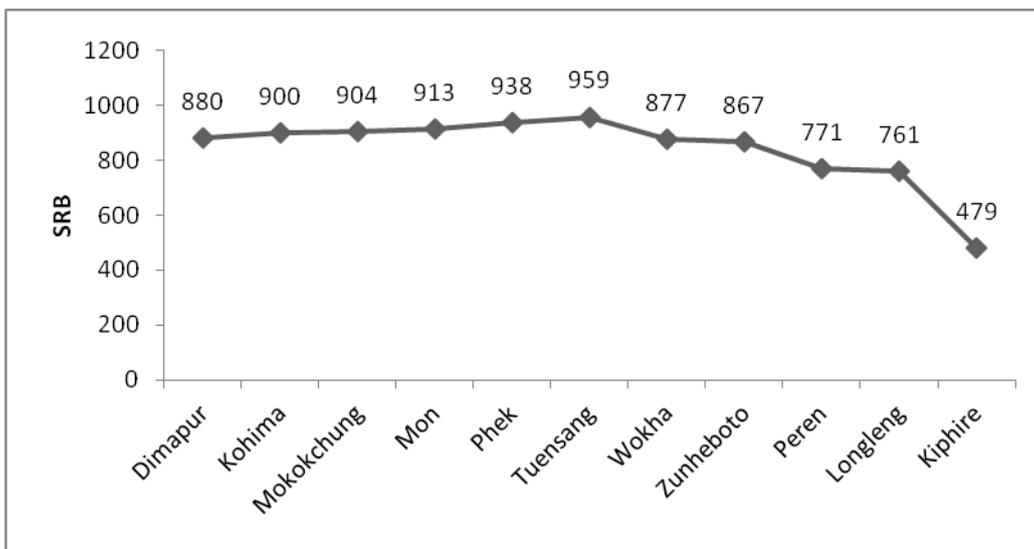


Fig.7: District wise variations in SRB in Nagaland, 2011; Source: Authors

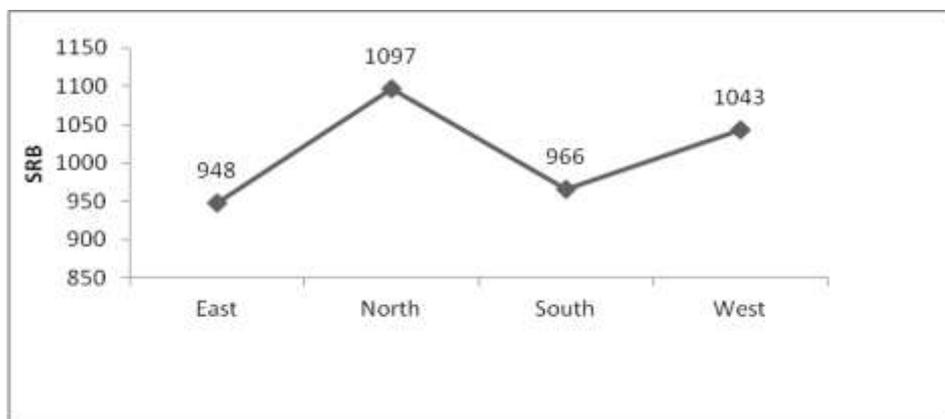


Fig.8: District wise variations in SRB in Sikkim, 2011; Source: Authors

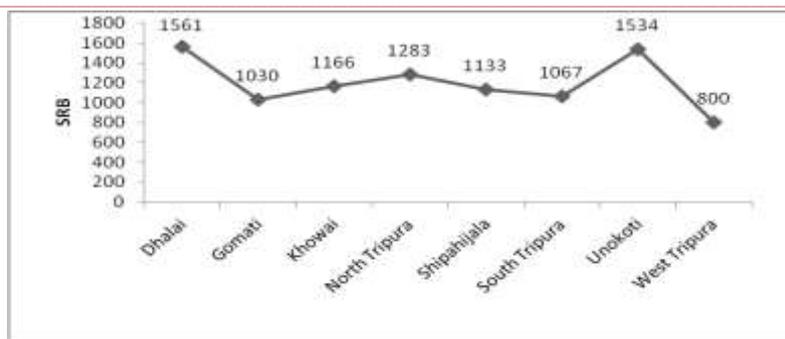


Fig. 9: District wise variations in SRB in Tripura, 2011; Source: Authors

C. DECADEAL CHANGES IN CHILD SEX RATIO IN NORTH EAST STATES (1991-2011)

Table-1 shows that all the North East states have experienced higher CSR than the national average during the last two decades. Though there exist wide variations in CSR. Assam has recorded declining trend in CSR during the whole period. Rural and urban areas have experienced the same fate. Meghalaya has shown declining trend of CSR during 1991-2011. Rural and urban areas are also showing the same trend. Manipur also shows declining trend of CSR throughout the period. Rural and urban areas both are showing declining pace. Nagaland has shown continuous declining trend in the last three decades. Rural areas have

shown decreasing trend whereas, urban areas have shown positive trend during 1991-2011. Tripura experiences declining trend in CSR in 2001-2011. Rural and urban areas also have the same fate. Sikkim has witnessed continuous decreasing trend in CSR from 1991 to 2011. Interestingly, rural areas are showing declining trend whereas, urban areas are showing increasing trend during 2001-2011. Positive trend has been found in Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram during 2001-2011. In Arunachal Pradesh, CSR in rural and urban areas have shown just the opposite side of the coin. In rural areas sharp decrease has been found in 1991-2001 and it increases thereafter whereas, in urban areas it is the opposite picture. Mizoram has shown increasing trend of CSR in both rural and urban areas in 2001-2011 as well.

Table-1: Settlement wise Child sex ratio in North-East states (1991-2011)

India/ States	Child Sex Ratio (0-6 Years)								
	1991			2001			2011		
	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban	Total	Rural	Urban
INDIA	945	948	935	927	934	906	918	923	905
Assam	975	977	955	965	967	943	962	964	944
Arunachal Pradesh	982	986	946	964	960	980	972	975	957
Meghalaya	986	989	968	973	973	969	970	972	954
Mizoram	969	973	965	964	965	963	970	966	974
Manipur	974	975	972	957	956	961	930	923	949
Nagaland	993	1001	959	964	969	939	943	933	973
Tripura	967	968	959	966	968	948	957	960	947
Sikkim	965	967	936	963	966	922	957	954	934

Sources: Census of India- 2001, 2011; Computed by the Authors

D. DISTRICT-WISE VARIATIONS IN CSR IN NORTH EAST STATES, 2011

According to 2011 census, wide variations have been observed in district level also. In Assam, all the districts except Kamrup Metropolitan have CSR above 950 and Udalguri district has the highest CSR (973). In Meghalaya, the highest CSR has been observed in East Garo Hills (980) and the lowest in Ri bhoi (953). In Arunachal Pradesh, all the districts have CSR above the national average (918). East Kameng has the third highest CSR in national level and highest in the state (1001) and Dibang Valley has the lowest CSR and only district in the state with a CSR below 900 (889). Changlang has witnessed an increasing CSR in 2001-2011. In Mizoram, all the districts have CSR higher than the national average. Saiha has the lowest CSR (932) in the state and Kolasib has recorded the highest CSR (980). In Manipur, only Senapati district has CSR below 900 and recorded as the lowest in the state (893). Imphal West has the highest CSR (949). In Nagaland, Kohima has scored the highest CSR (985) and Longleng has scored the lowest CSR (885). In Tripura, all the districts though have CSR above the national average but trend is declining. North Tripura scored the highest value 969 whereas; South Tripura scored the lowest value 951. In Sikkim, West district has the highest CSR (964) whereas; North district has the lowest CSR (929).

IV. CONCLUSION

Declining trends of SRB and CSR in North East states and rest of the country will artificially change the social demography. Consequences will be observed in every sphere of the society and may boost trafficking and violence against women and girls. More research is needed indeed to find out the social consequences of the skewed sex ratio in the country.

Government has already enacted the law and the Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Regulation and Prevention of Misuse) Act came into force in 1994. Subsequently, it was amended in 2003 to regulate pre-conception sex selection as well. It is now known as Pre-Conception and Pre-Natal Diagnostics Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act. But the law is difficult to implement as it's about choice and privacy.

Communities and government need to take proactive roles to engender an equal value of the girl child otherwise number of the missing girls will continue to be increased in geometrical progression in future.

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