

## **SUMMARY**

### **Catherine Lee, Class of 2007**

For the months of July and August I provided research assistance for a study of the effects of mandated political representation of women in India. The Indian government requires a randomly selected group of Gram Panchayats, local government bodies at the village level, to elect women as Pradhans, or head village councilors. Professor Pande has run extensive field surveys to gauge the impact that the election of women officials may have on the provision of public goods and on general public opinion, particularly with respect to issues considered most pertinent to females and children.

#### My responsibilities included

- cleaning large sets of data containing responses to surveys. This included formatting variables, merging appropriate information, checking for missing or erroneous data, and performing various other manipulations in Stata.
- regressing various variables of interest indicating effective provision of public goods as well as general attitudes of Pradhans as revealed by the surveys in order to look for differences along the gender of the current Pradhan as well as that of the previous Pradhan. Results of these regressions are currently being examined.
- working with several sets of data to match all Gram Panchayats which are part of our study with data indicating conditions in villages, such as literacy rates and availability of drinking water, from the Indian census prior to mandated female representation. The purpose of this activity is to establish that the process of reserving certain Pradhan positions for females was indeed random and that there existed no initial differences between the conditions of the reserved and unreserved villages; this task is ongoing as well.
- coding transcripts of Gram Sabha meetings, which are run by village councilors and held twice a year for all villagers over the age of eighteen to attend. I recorded variables such as number of words spoken by villagers of different gender, the types of issues raised, and the kinds of responses provided by the Pradhan. This information is to be used to search for trends which seem to differentiate Gram Sabha meetings run by female Pradhans.

The first three tasks required extensive programming in Stata as well as familiarity with econometric concepts. The new skills I have learned in Stata and Excel will be invaluable to me as I continue to pursue research work in economics. The SRO experience also allowed me the opportunity to interact frequently with graduate students and attend intriguing dissertation presentations. SRO has solidified my desire to attend a graduate program in economics and made me more confident in my understanding of how economic research is run on the large scale as well as at the day-to-day level. I plan to continue working for Professor Pande on this project during the school year.