

number (an administrative number pre-dating this reform). They are then ranked in three separate lists, according to whether or not the seats were reserved for a SC, for a ST, or were unreserved (these reservations were also chosen randomly, following a similar method). Using these lists, every third GP starting with the first on the list is reserved for a woman Pradhan for the first election.<sup>6</sup>

From discussions with the government officials at the Panchayat Directorate who devised the system and district officials who implemented it in individual districts, it appears that these instructions were successfully implemented. More importantly, in the district we study in West Bengal, we could verify that the policy was strictly implemented. After sorting the GPs into those reserved for SC/ST and those not reserved, we could reconstruct the entire list of GPs reserved for a woman by sorting all GPs by their serial number, and selecting every third GP starting from the first in each list. This verifies that the allocation of GPs to the reserved list was indeed random, as intended.<sup>7</sup>

Table I shows the number of female Pradhans in reserved and unreserved GPs in both states. In both states, all Pradhans in GPs reserved for a woman are female. In West Bengal, only 6.5% of the Pradhans are female in unreserved GPs. In Rajasthan, only one woman was elected on an unreserved seat, despite the fact that this was the second cycle. Women elected once due to the reservation system were not re-elected.<sup>8</sup>

TABLE I  
FRACTION OF WOMEN AMONG PRADHANS IN RESERVED  
AND UNRESERVED GP

	Reserved GP (1)	Unreserved GP (2)
<i>West Bengal</i>		
Total Number	54	107
Proportion of Female Pradhans	100%	6.5%
<i>Rajasthan</i>		
Total Number	40	60
Proportion of Female Pradhans	100%	1.7%

<sup>6</sup>For the next election, every third GP starting with the second on the list was reserved for a woman, etc. The Panchayat Constitution Rule has actual tables indicating the ranks of the GPs to be reserved in each election.

<sup>7</sup>We could not obtain the necessary information to perform the same exercise in Rajasthan. However, there too, the system appears to have been correctly implemented.

<sup>8</sup>The one woman elected on an unreserved seat had not been previously elected on a reserved seat.