

**Analysis of Customer and Employee Interviews**

by  
**Emma Sand**  
**Cate Ralph**



**Miller Center**  
for Social Entrepreneurship

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This past summer, we set out to understand the inner workings of Oorja's business and determine the best and most effective strategies for implementing gender inclusion practices that help increase the organization's number of female customers. We found that hiring more female employees is the best way to expand the organization's female customer base, for those employees can leverage their community networks to reach more women and communicate with them more empathetically. To recruit and retain these female employees, it is imperative to create a work environment where women feel safe, supported, and empowered. With this strategy in mind, Oorja has the opportunity to include female farmers as an additional customer segment to its business strategy. This document presents the interviews that led us to conclude that increasing female customers could be best accomplished through increasing the number of female employees. It will also explain the rationale behind the interview format and questions asked as well as the context of many of the answers we received.

### Rationale

1. **Female farmers are critical to Indian agriculture.** Many men travel into urban centers for employment, leaving women to operate family farms despite their limited economic agency in the households.
2. **Many women in Uttar Pradesh have non-negotiable household responsibilities anchored to certain times.** To effectively recruit women both as employees and as customers, Oorja must understand and create programs that work around women's prior commitments.
3. **Effective gender inclusion strategies extend to job descriptions and recruitment of staff.** Partial strategies for gender inclusion are unlikely to produce results. Oorja can progress its gender inclusion goals by reimagining how to attract and retain women on its team, thus better reaching female customers.
4. **Protocols for gender inclusion are imperative to equity.** By understanding the unique needs of men and women, Oorja can implement practices that ensure the safety of employees and empower them within the workplace.
5. **Women are encouraged by role models.** When women can relate to employees on a fundamental level, they are much more likely to apply for a job or inquire about Oorja's services themselves..

## Key Findings

A difference of opinion once occurred between a male and female employee.

When asking respondents about gender scorecards, we found that these tools are often not entirely accurate in measuring the progress of an organization. Oorja, for example, has been dedicating numerous resources towards both company culture advancement and customer base expansion in an effort to bridge India's prevalent gender gap—specifically and more severely in Uttar Pradesh. Through further collaboration and flexibility between investors and social entrepreneurs in the field, this more comprehensive approach to gender equity can become a reality. Communication can facilitate a more extensive mutual understanding between these two parties, thereby allowing social enterprises to scale while simultaneously ensuring the improvement of the lives of women they impact. Additionally, we found that although best practices seem to be the gold standard for measuring impact according to impact investors, such standards might not be effective at initiating universal social change due to the idiosyncratic nature of social enterprises. Focusing on stagnant practices that have worked for some enterprises hinders engagement and innovation for others. To ensure that innovation persists, it is imperative to continuously create and implement new frameworks for fostering social change.

Through our interviews, we found that Oorja was looking to continue improving in a number of ways. While we found positive responses about the perception of gender within the company—especially from upper management—it appeared challenging to continue that narrative throughout the organization while also onboarding more women in certain positions.

Our interviews became a jumping-off point for two deliverables which will hopefully help Oorja engage more women and foster a better working environment for those women.

The outreach document provides materials to help Oorja increase its number of female job applicants for fieldwork positions—a key obstacle to hiring more women. The document begins by outlining the benefits of hiring more women and giving important insights into how women employees can more largely impact the success of the organization. The document continues by delving into current obstacles for attracting female applicants and solutions to each of the identified problems. The document draws upon evidence from the interviews and creates a comprehensive format for solving these problems.

We created a gender equity training manual for Oorja employees to go through to further their understanding of the importance of gender equity both within Oorja and within their own lives. After interviewing, we found that there are many Oorja employees who value gender equity, but many who are unfamiliar with the term and the concept. Through the training, we hope to address some of the inherent or internal bias' that were brought up as we were interviewing.

The training provides examples, discussion questions, and activities that help elucidate the reality of a more gender-equitable environment. It asks participants to reflect on their own experiences with gender and acknowledge and grapple with bias that they might hold. Through the understanding of where bias comes from and the reality that everyone is biased in some way or another, we worked to create a framework for people to address their bias and understand its origins more clearly.

The goal of the module is to create a session for participants to understand the importance of gender equity and face some of their biases in a new way. By creating a working environment that is conducive to the success of all employees, Oorja will be able to recruit, hire, and obtain more female employees which will hopefully help them increase the number of female customers. Many of the interviews revealed that women are able to connect more deeply with customers because of the cultural context of Uttar Pradesh. Women are able to create a deeper connection with other female customers which gives them further insight into the needs of female farmers. When women hold positions within Oorja, they also become role models of female farmers who could apply to work at Oorja in the future. Without female field workers, other women won't be as inclined to work at Oorja. As more women take on positions at Oorja, they will be able to cater to a larger female farmer base that can increase the number of customers Oorja has. By tapping into an additional customer segment, Oorja can continue to expand its venture and scale to impact more rural farmers. We also found that when women are employed, they are more likely to stay in their positions longer than their male counterparts, be more passionate about their position, and take more ownership. These characteristics will help Oorja grow quickly, effectively, and with impact.

# Oorja Development Solutions

## Gender Mainstreaming Customer Interviewing Manual

### **Interview Guide:**

1. Shraddha will begin by conducting pilot interviews with a group of female customers and a group of male customers.
2. Interviews will be conducted without the presence of the opposite gender.
3. Interviews will be conducted in groups of 4-6 customers.
4. Shraddha will transcribe the interviews as they are being conducted.
  - a. She will utilize the nonverbal cues from the interviewees to give more context regarding their answers.
  - b. Sasmita will sit in on a few pilot interviews and provide feedback after interviews are conducted.
5. Shraddha doesn't necessarily have to follow the exact script of the interviews; however, she should follow the numbered guidelines showing the goal of each question--questions are shown in italics.
6. After two pilot interviews--one with each gender group--we will review the information gathered and adjust the questions accordingly.
  - a. Do the interviews give us enough necessary information?
  - b. Will the interviews be best if they are done in a group setting?
7. After piloting we will continue onto further interviews with the remaining groups.

### **INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:**

#### **Female customers:**

We want to determine the barriers to entry between women and Oorja's services.

- Use Oorja's current data on customers to help analyze our responses
  - Ex. land size, income

#### **Roles/Responsibilities**

1. Find out specific activities that these women do on the farm and how and why it is specific to women.

*What activities are you involved in on a regular basis?*

*How does this differ from the men in your household?*

*How does this change with the seasons?*

*Has this role changed since working with Oorja? If so, how? Be specific.*

2. We want to get **quantitative** data regarding time saved and various activities done.
  - a. Specifics of how men and women are benefitting from Oorja's membership.
    - i. Time saved
      1. How much time is saved per week? Per month?
    - ii. Hours saved and time spent on other activities and what activities they were.

*What services of Oorja's do you use?*

*Does the membership with Oorja save you, specific men?*

What within the household is non-negotiable in terms of responsibilities

- iii. What is constrained by time?
- b. Make sure they include responsibilities and relationship dynamics
  - i. Familial and social relationships.
  - ii. We want to understand the details of their interactions with the people around them.
  - iii. Why do they do certain things or have certain responsibilities?

*What are your responsibilities in the household?*

*How much time is spent on these activities?*

*What time of day is the busiest?*

*Do these responsibilities clash with your economic work? (How? To what extent?)*

*With your kids and other family members (if applicable)*

*What are your children's roles? (if applicable) Or how do they help you with your responsibilities?*

*Do your children specifically benefit in any way from the product?*

*How have Oorja's services changed your household dynamic?*

*Who is benefiting most from the membership with Oorja?*

***Which responsibilities do you feel you cannot change?***

***Which responsibilities are anchored to a certain time?***

- 3. We want to get an illustrative idea of what these women's days are like so we can address any details or circumstances that we would not be aware of otherwise.

*Describe your day-to-day life in detail.*

*What are your priorities throughout your day?*

*What activities are you involved in to earn money?*

*Are you a part of any self-help or women's groups?*

*Do you have access to government schemes, banking, and financials, or decision-making power within your household?*

*What do you get to give your opinion on and about what?*

- 4. Any final points regarding Oorja's services in terms of gender roles and responsibilities.

*What do you think is the most beneficial part of Oorja's services?*

*Are there any other ways in which Oorja's services have benefitted you specifically that you have not already mentioned?*

**Membership:**

- 5. How was Oorja marketed to them?

*How did you find out about Oorja?*

- 6. Benefits of the membership and family roles. To see who benefits the most.

*How is the membership in your household used?*

*Was it easy to obtain a membership with Oorja? Why or why not?*

*What are the benefits of irrigation?*

*What are the costs incurred due to crop loss?*

*How do you protect your investment in your crops?*

*How easy was the transition to using Oorja's services?*

*Were the services themselves accessible enough? Why or why not?*

*Are you the one who goes to pay?*

*Is there any time when someone else would go? If so, who?*

*Did you ever hesitate to use Oorja's products?*

7. Quantitative data and specific tasks.

*Does Oorja's product save your household time? If so, how much?*

*What tasks are you able to complete because of the product?*

*How much money do you save?*

*How high is the yield after access to irrigation?*

8. These are different from the above as they pertain to the household as a whole.

a. Get specific quantitative information—hours and specific activities

b. Rupee amounts saved and what the savings go towards

c. Who controls the finances in your household? Are there particular instances where this role changes?

d. Is there ever a time when women control their finances and how do they spend money differently than men?

*Does Oorja's product save you money?*

*How much money is saved because of the product?*

*What do you spend the extra money on?*

11. What specific metrics were used in the decision-making process (deciding to use Oorja).

*Why did your household choose to become members of Oorja's services?*

*Do you see your family using Oorja's services in the future?*

*Would you recommend Oorja to a friend?*

*Do you feel as if the membership is worth the cost?*

*What initially drew you to get a membership?*

*Others signing up? Demonstration of the process? Price of services?*

12. This question is regarding who controls the finance within the household

*Do women in your household handle money or pay for the service at all?*

*Do women wait for their spouses to pay or do they pay immediately?*

*Who checks the flow meter? Man or woman?*

*Are women trusted in their households to carry out the aforementioned activities?*

**Positional:**

13. We want to inquire about females holding technician positions in any capacity so we want to gauge interest regarding the technician position itself and how the position can be altered to meet the needs of the women in these communities.

*If there were training programs in place, would you consider a career as a technician?*

*What kind of salary support would you be looking for if you were offered this position?  
Do any of your female peers have similar positions working?*

*Under what circumstances would you accept a position with Oorja?  
How would you feel about working for Oorja on the ground with technicians as a marketing manager?*

14. We want to understand how much time they could devote and if this is something that they are interested in.

*Would you attend technician training sessions?*

*If Oorja was able to offer you a position that would allow you to work during times that don't conflict with your household responsibilities, would that be appealing to you?*

15. We want to understand how females would be perceived if they were to become technicians in the field.

*How would you feel about a female taking on the role of a technician? What about a collection agent?  
Would she be treated similarly to her male counterparts within the same position?*

### **Male customers**

#### **Roles/Responsibilities**

1. Find out specific activities that these men do on the farm and how and why it is specific to women.

*What is your role on the farm?*

*How does this differ from the men in your household?*

*Has this role changed since working with Oorja? If so, how? Be specific.*

2. We want to get **quantitative** data regarding time saved and various activities done.
- Specifics of how men and women are benefitting from Oorja's membership.
    - Time saved
      - How much time is saved per week? Per month?
      - Compare to women to gauge the awareness of men.
    - Hours saved and time spent on other activities and what activities they were.

*Does the membership with Oorja save you time in your day?*

3. We want to learn their responsibilities so that we can foster an environment that caters to their needs instead of trying to get them to fit into our mold.
- How the role as a man and father is fundamentally different from the parental roles of women.
  - What responsibilities within the household are non-negotiable.
4. Make sure they include responsibilities and relationship dynamics
- Familial and social relationships.
  - We want to understand the details of their interactions with the people around them.
  - Why do they do certain things or have certain responsibilities?

*What are your responsibilities in the household?*

*With your kids and other family members (if applicable)*

*What are your children's roles? (if applicable) Or how do they help you with your responsibilities?*

*Do your children specifically benefit in any way from the product?*

*How have Oorja's services changed the way you spend time with your family? Or your personal Time?*

*Who is benefiting most from the membership with Oorja?*

5. We want to get an illustrative idea of what these men's days are like so we can address any details or circumstances that we would not be aware of otherwise.

*Describe your day-to-day life in detail.*

*What are your priorities throughout your day?*

6. Any final points regarding Oorja's services in terms of gender roles and responsibilities.

*What do you think is the most beneficial part of Oorja's services?*

*Are there any other ways in which Oorja's services have benefitted you specifically that you have not already mentioned?*

### **Membership:**

7. How was Oorja marketed to them?

*How did you find out about Oorja?*

8. Benefits of the membership and family roles. To see who benefits the most.

*How is the membership in your household used?*

*Was it easy to obtain a membership with Oorja? Why or why not?*

*How easy was the transition to using Oorja's services?*

*Were the services themselves accessible enough? Why or why not?*

*Are you the one who goes to pay?*

*Is there any time when someone else would go? If so, who?*

*Did you ever hesitate to use Oorja's products?*

9. We want to see if it makes sense for households where most people use the membership to have multiple names on the card.

*Would you feel comfortable with your wife's name being on the membership?*

*If a rebate were to be offered on the use of services would they take the membership in the name of the female within the household?*

*Do you think it would be beneficial for your wife's name to be on the membership?*

*Do you think that it would be beneficial to have the opportunity to cosign the membership?*

10. How would this affect their affinity to the product?

*Would you be interested in using the services of a female technician? Do you think it would be beneficial?*

11. Quantitative data and specific tasks.

*Does Oorja's product save your household time? If so, how much?*

*What tasks are you able to complete because of the product?*

12. These are different from the above as they pertain to the household as a whole.

e. Get specific quantitative information—hours and specific activities

f. Rupee amounts saved and what the savings go towards

g. Who controls the finances in your household are there particular instances where this role changes?

h. Is there ever a time when women control their finances and how do they spend money differently than men?

*Does Oorja's product save you money?*

*How much money is saved because of the product?*

*What do you spend the extra money on?*

13. What specific metrics were used in the decision-making process (deciding to use Oorja)?

*Why did your household choose to become members of Oorja's services?*

*Do you see your family using Oorja's services in the future?*

*Would you recommend Oorja to a friend?*

*Do you feel as if the membership is worth the cost?*

*What aspects of the service would you like to see improved?*

*What initially drew you to get a membership?*

14. This question is regarding who controls the finance within the household

*Who pays for your membership?*

15. We want to understand how females would be perceived if they were to become technicians in the field.

*How would you feel about a female taking on the role of a technician? What about a collection agent?*

*Would she be treated similarly to her male counterparts within this position?*

## Key Findings:

### **Women's responsibilities:**

Women in the Uttar Pradesh region have many responsibilities. Through interviews, we found that women's days typically begin at 4:00 am and end at 10:00 pm. Throughout their day they are responsible for the majority of household activities and do not get help from men in their homes with these responsibilities. In addition to household tasks, many women are responsible for work on the farm, although the type of work and frequency changes depending on the season. While working with Oorja saved many women time on farming activities, their household responsibilities have remained the same. Many women explained that they are busy with household responsibilities for ten to twelve hours per day: they devote the hours of 6:00 am - 12:00 pm and 5:00 pm - 10:00 pm to household activities. These hours are of the utmost importance because if women were to take on further responsibilities outside of the household, they must work around these hours.

Women currently aren't involved in any economic activities—or means of earning money. Women within the villages don't have access to self-help groups, women's groups, government intervention programs, banking or financial services, decision-making power to organize events like marriage, veneration, or investment decision-making power.

### Female household responsibilities:

- Cleaning cloths
- Taking care of children
- Farming, cooking
- Cleaning the house
- Taking care of animals
- Looking after children
- Taking care of elders
- Observe field: watering, soring, spraying

### **Oorja Impact on Children**

Through our interviews with customers, we realized the profound impact Oorja's services have on children within the communities Oorja has services in. Children in many last-mile farming communities are responsible for some household and farming work. More specifically they bring diesel from the market. If farmers don't have engines (renters) irrigation can occur at night. The irrigation process requires labor from the children, impeding their sleep and in turn their academic performance. When farmers became members of Oorja, the children benefited from the saved time, money, effort, and harassment that can occur throughout the process of obtaining diesel and irrigating using diesel engines.

### **Benefits of Irrigation:**

After becoming members of Oorja, many farmers experienced great benefits from the irrigation services specifically. Farmers no longer had to travel long distances to purchase diesel or transport engines into their fields to irrigate crops. Rather, irrigation happened much more consistently, with lower costs incurred and times saved. The consistency of irrigation has led to higher crop yields for many farmers giving them much more stability than they have had previously. It is important to note, however, that male farmers experienced more benefits from Oorja's services than females because male responsibilities are rooted in farming practices as opposed to women's which are geared toward domestic duties.

### **Women in Positions within Oorja:**

After interviewing female customers, we found that there were a few women who could imagine taking on the position of a collection agent. They expressed interest in the creation of a training program led by women that would adequately prepare them for the fieldwork. Women additionally expressed a need for a reasonable salary as well as an expectation that the position would work in accordance with their household responsibilities.

It should be noted that many women are apprehensive about taking on fieldwork positions because the “mentality of the people of the villages does not show equality between men and women.”

When men were asked about women taking on technician positions, they explained that they would be supportive, but they feared that women would not be treated as equals if they were to become collection agents.

\*\*This could be problematic because becoming a collection agent requires a level of schooling that many women don't have. For women to become technicians, they will need to continue their education. Continuing education poses a challenge for many women because they have so many concrete household responsibilities that are not malleable.

\*\*Women could feasibly become collection agents, but we worry that the unequal perceptions of men and women exhibited within these occupations could prove too ingrained to overcome.

\*\* The collection agent problem might be solved by requiring a team of one male and one female to travel together as a pair of collection agents rather than only having one. This would improve the perception of people in the villages because they would be able to communicate effectively with everyone—not just one gender.

## Employee Interview Format

*The first two questions focused on understanding each individual and their position within Oorja to ensure that we were framing the rest of the questions in a way that would allow them to answer most effectively.*

### **First, tell us a little bit about your background and how that led you to work at Oorja.**

*Answers varied depending on the position, but most were focused on the mission of the organization and the drive to both help save the environment and enable communities to increase their farming capacity.*

### **How would you describe your position at Oorja?**

*Answers varied greatly depending on the position and at large weren't pertinent to our research on the impacts of Gender within Oorja.*

### **Do you think there are improvements that could be made internally to make your job easier?**

*Answers varied for these responses, but many focused on the organization of Oorja.*

*Respondent 1: Digitization of various projects done by more junior staff. Junior staff should take on digitizing the various information related to particular projects. For example equipment, serial numbers, etc.*

*Respondent 2: Ensure that they recover the capital investment.*

*Diversify the team and ensure that everyone is on the same page and communicating.*

*Expectations and pressure change.*

- *Desk jobs talk to investors.*
- *Field teams talk to customers.*
- *Internet connectivity isn't always great.*
- *People aren't always reliable—suppliers and community members.*
- *The internal team doesn't know their procedures.*
- *Examples: to install solar pumps they have to install a well. If the well breaks in the community, the community needs to pay to install a new well.*
  - *If this isn't communicated when the person selling is bringing the service, there is a disconnect between what the upper management expects and what the community expects.*

*External: cultural obstacles—culture and practices vary greatly across India (rural and urban areas).*

*Diverse backgrounds working together—different ways of working in the field and at a desk.*

*Tracking projects in the field can be challenging to track very specifically at all times.*

*Respondent 3: Doing their best right now—no imminent improvements.*

**What do you personally hope to gain from your position at Oorja?**

*Varied per respondent. This question, similar to the one above, was more to establish a rapport and gain insights on why employees were working for Oorja.*

**Currently, do you feel like there are any obstacles preventing you from pursuing those aspirations?**

*Respondent 1: Time management in terms of having so many different tasks going on and needing to prioritize certain tasks over others.*

- *Many people have their own tasks, and they also build off of other people which contributes to each individual's workload.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *Could have been more collaborative.*
- *Very remote environment away from the user group made it challenging to come up with outcomes that were right for the product.*
- *Access to different data sets could be easier.*
  - *Scattered data sets throughout Microsoft teams.*

**When there are disagreements within the workplace, how helpful are men to ensuring all sides are heard?**

*Respondent 1: Oftentimes when there are disagreements within the workplace, especially between men and women, they can be resolved on the spot and there is space for understanding and communicating about the issue. Respondents found that there is normally a good level of respect between male and female employees.*

- *One instance of disagreement: Male in the situation had been brought up to think of men and women as unequal. He had a mentality that even if men and women have the same role within society that the woman would not be able to perform at the same level as her male counterpart.*
  - *The argument was addressed by a higher up in the organization because it is imperative for Oorja to hire women and provide an enabling environment to catalyze their success.*
  - *There are employees that have an attitude that women cannot perform at the same level as men, especially regarding more laborious tasks.*
- *Men in India have this mentality about women and often will bring up work to position themselves in a superior position over women.*

- *Would like men to judge based on the work that women do as opposed to their gender.*
- *Felt supported in all instances*
  - *Felt that women are wanted within the value chain.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *The male-heavy team currently.*
- *Gender aware at the leadership level but might not be as far down.*
- *Good level of awareness—working to provide more equity at all levels but there isn't training currently.*
- *Not great at the field level—harder to get women on the team because of conditions of working and patriarchal nature of India.*
  - *Not incorporating specific concerns for women.*
  - *Men might not think about the fact that women can't go home late if a meeting runs late.*
- *Field level they might not be as aware of gender issues.*
  - *The cultural difference that exists here.*
  - *Not as aware of the needs of women and gender bias.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *A pilot project in Bihar—hard to convince farmers to use their services in the new region.*
- *Since most of the projects are running in Uttar Pradesh and only one in Bihar, it can be challenging to convince customers to utilize the product.*
  - *They fear that it will be costly.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *No disagreements but there is a communication gap because there are so many cultural nuances within India.*
- *Working in the northern part of India from the west posed a specific challenge.*
  - *Language and the way of speaking is different.*
  - *Challenging to get to insightful outcomes because of the communication gap.*
- 

**Do you believe that gender equity is a focal point of your organization?**

*Respondent 1: Women are desired within all levels of the company.*

- *Although women might not be able to deliver at the exact same capacity as men, management sees women as a great asset.*
  - *Women cannot work as late and are constrained by the time more than men.*
- *They give preference to women to ensure that women can have experience and create upward mobility for those women.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Not a focal point on the whole organization—more about affordability and livelihoods.*
- *Management level is a focal point but the uptake in other parts.*
- *Gender is not a focal point at the ground level.*
- *It is important that everyone on the team feels comfortable.*
  - *Including more women at every level could help to mitigate this and elucidate the importance of gender.*
- *Most of their customers are male and want to attract more female customers.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *Oorja acts as a whole team.*
- *Because there are male and female leaders promoting women in roles.*
- *There is a trend where more females are taking on positions within the company*
- *Hiring more women to field positions can be challenging.*
  - *To make the job easier to fulfill by women.*
  - *Oorja can give roles to women.*
  - *If male candidates are with females it will give women the opportunity to work in the field.*
  - *Fieldwork is helpful for both men and women so that the woman is more confident in her work.*
  - *Women have better communication with female farmers.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *Oorja is good at encouraging gender equity.*
- *Not sure about giving equal opportunities because there is a gap between the number of men working and the number of women working.*
  - *This could be due to the type of jobs—some jobs are harder to have women working in.*
  - *Some positions might not be safe for women to work in.*
    - *Gender disparity especially in UP.*
    - *The commute is not very safe.*
    - *On-field people who work in very remote areas—sometimes you have to walk to certain villages .*
    - *Not proper light in those regions.*
- *Besides the gap between the number of men and the number of women employees, Oorja has an encouraging environment in terms of gender.*

**→ Do you believe that everyone you work with feels the same?**

*Respondent 1: Many other employees feel this way because many experience the obstacles mentioned previously in their own homes.*

- *Many higher-level employees within Oorja want to see a shift towards a more equitable space for women.*
- *Although many employees are empathetic to the experiences of women, there could be a disconnect with men on the ground team.*
  - *This respondent grew up in an urban center where there was not as much gender discrimination.*
- *It is common in India for women to be encouraged not to work or become educated due to security reasons.*
  - *Hindrance to women acquiring jobs.*
  - *The excuse for preventing female employment and education is that the older generations are worried about their daughters.*
    - *This is important to take into consideration when understanding why certain team members act in certain ways towards women.*

**Oorja obviously has HR policies and other rules that aim to prevent gender discrimination within the workplace. Do you feel like those policies are effective?**

**→ if anything, what could be done to improve these policies?**

*Respondent 1: Challenging to onboard females.*

- *Few female candidates and applications from women.*
  - *This could be due to the region that Oorja is based in.*
- *The policies are well worded and well-framed to reach women within the community.*
- *Oorja is trying to employ them.*
- *Everyone gets a voice in weekly calls.*
  - *Women will also be trained and be encouraged to speak up in the same capacity as their male counterparts.*
  - *This training emphasizes peer to peer mentoring.*
  - *The equity training will be crucial here because everyone has the same understanding of their position within Oorja and understands how to communicate with one another in an equitable and inclusive manner.*
- *Many women don't want to work in a location that is remote.*
  - *This would require them to leave their family and travel somewhere—which poses a threat to their safety and requires additional time.*
    - *Some people have to stay in the places where they work.*
    - *Many aim to find locations close to their homes.*
    - *Public transportation poses the threat of harassment.*
      - *Many buses.*
    - *Fieldwork positions require women to leave.*
- *Oorja would want to look to NGOs and other governmental organizations as pipelines for gaining more female interest, but those outlets don't have a large female base.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *HR policies on paper.*
- *Some are communicated and some are not.*
- *Doing well with gender bias and awareness.*
- *Quotas are loosely respected.*
- *Opportunities for professional development are good.*
- *Policies that benefit all employees but especially women—parental leave, accident insurance, health insurance, medical insurance.*
- *Individual employees having more upward mobility—develop training plans for developed field employees to build up the next level of leadership.*
- *Not a great level of HR capabilities.*

**In terms of partnerships, Oorja works with other social enterprises and NGOs such as WE4F. If you have a meeting with male officials from those organizations and they don't show you an adequate level of respect, would you feel comfortable coming back and reporting that? To whom?**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Yes, I would feel comfortable reporting this.*
  - *Typically expects female to female or male to male conversations.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Feel comfortable speaking up in the meeting or after but definitely to talk about it after*
- *Hopeful that others will do the same.*
- *Hopeful that others in the team will support them if they want to speak up in the meeting.*
- *With gender training.*
- *Sexual harassment policies mandated in India at a certain threshold.*
  - *Procedure in place to address these.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *Would feel comfortable reporting inappropriate behavior towards women to leadership.*
- *On the weekly call, there is a time for recommendations and feedback—feels like this is a space where they can discuss behavior specifically pertaining to gender.*
  - *These meeting platforms are a space for everyone to talk about their experience.*

**Have you ever witnessed a female being criticized for stepping outside her traditional gender role? I.e. for behaving too much like a man.**

*Respondent 2:*

- *Not very many women on the team so not a lot of feedback.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *The team appointed a female operator and met with the farmers to tell them that if he wasn't there then there would be a female farmer.*
- *The farmer said that men would be more profitable in the position.*
- *He said that they have to promote women for the role.*
- *Female candidates are very capable of carrying out these positions but that might not be the sentiment throughout the community.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *On a large scale, the roles at Oorja aren't divided by gender.*
- *In some cases they are, but it's not very obvious.*

**If there were to be more gender lens training for Oorja employees, what would you want that training to include? What do you think would be most effective/beneficial?**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Female in the same position as a male can do the same level of work.*
  - *Take her gender out of it.*
- *You have to create an enabling environment for females.*
  - *Take into account women's domestic responsibilities.*
  - *Women need to be supported and ensure that they can carry out their other responsibilities as well as the job they have been hired for.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Introduce the concept of gender equity and the benefits of it.*
- *What do we mean when we say gender equity?*
- *What does gender equity mean within the organization?*
  - *Meaning that people feel as though they can speak up about things and feel comfortable at work.*
  - *And that people don't feel like they are being discriminated against.*
- *Tackle inherent bias and gender bias.*
- *What is considered male and female behaviors.*
- *Socially climatized behaviors when we might not be aware that we are showing a bias.*
- *Blurred lines between really friendly and being intimate.*
- *What constitutes harassment.*
- *What to do if sexual harassment happens—how it's a crime.*
- *Different needs of female customers and other customers.*
- *How to integrate women.*
- *Organizing women-only meetings so that women can speak out.*
- *Hiring women operators.*
- *Bringing women onto the team.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *No answer.*
- *Geographically and culturally dependent especially in UP.*
- *UP is much more patriarchal than other regions in India.*

### **How are meetings generally run?**

→ **Are there usually designated roles within meetings in terms of who speaks when?**

→ **What percentage of time in meetings are men speaking and what percentage are women speaking?**

→ **Are women and men given equal opportunities to speak and lead discussions?**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Weekly calls*
  - *All employees talk about this and each employee gets time to report on their positions.*
  - *Amit and Clementine trade-off leading these conversations.*
  - *Each member is given 5-7 minutes to speak.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Top-down style meetings.*
- *People are called on individually and then people call out to talk about what they are working on.*
- *Could be improved.*
- *There are also 1-1 meetings and smaller group settings.*
- *There are language, cultural and gender barriers.*
  - *Call on everyone to say something.*
- *There is a new format—brainstorming session in Hindi.*
  - *Lots of positive feedback from this.*
- *Training from various members of the team.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *Women are given equal opportunities to speak during meetings.*

### **Do you think hiring more women would be beneficial to Oorja's internal workplace?**

*Respondent 1: Yes*

- *Women have a good sense of understanding when it comes to various issues because they have seen both sides—household and what they learned from their education.*
- *Women have good decision-making skills.*
- *Understanding women's problems and challenges.*
  - *Men typically haven't seen these challenges so they have a harder time empathizing.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Yes.*
- *Big imbalance right now.*
- *Urgent staffing needs.*
- *Pressed for time and have to hire men.*
- *Lack of female candidates lead to hiring many men.*
- *Lots of female talent that they are not tapping into because they can't get to the female pool of candidates.*
- *Females are the best people—passionate.*
- *Would be beneficial to get more balance and to have people who are more committed.*
- *Hopeful that every member of the organization will add more benefits to women—even financial benefits for female employees.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *Yes.*
- *Mixes up desk jobs and field jobs—would be helpful to have a female candidate.*
- *It won't change the perception of the customers.*
- *In the field position, women will face some problems in the field in terms of communication hesitation from farmers.*
- *If a man introduces the female field worker then she can be more beneficial to the impact of Oorja.*
- *Women can be more beneficial because they can go inside of the home of a woman and talk about anything that she wants—which men can't do.*
- *If a man tries to talk to a woman the husband will just respond.*
- *About 35% of farmers are women and would benefit from having women.*

*Respondent 5:*

- *Yes, based on experience through different jobs and in Oorja, women are generally more passionate and invested in their projects.*
- *Women typically show more empathy in the work that they do.*
- *Women bring more empathy and passion.*
- *Given ½ of the population is women there isn't equality or equity in many places.*
- *If they need to positively discriminate towards women to help women—give them more equitable opportunities.*
  - *The baseline was not fair.*
- *Women are more invested.*
- *Hard skills can be learned by both men and women.*
- *With women, they can be put in a position where they can help achieve the goals of the organization better.*

**Would hiring more women make you feel more comfortable doing your job?**

**→ if so, why?**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Women are more responsible.*
  - *More responsibility towards completing those tasks and seem to have a sense of ownership.*
- *Will help Shraddha to carry out interviews and onboard different skills and knowledge as agriculture becomes more female-dominated each day.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *It will feel like a more balanced and normal working environment.*
- *Wants everyone to feel comfortable.*

*Respondent 3:*

- *There are certain requirements for females to fulfill certain roles.*
- *Could be beneficial to hire a female HR professional when they are searching for one.*

*Respondent 5:*

- *Doesn't seem like a difference in terms of gender.*
- *Feels comfortable either way.*
- *Doesn't think of colleagues in terms of gender.*
- *All colleagues are there for a reason and have roles to play.*
- *If they are fulfilling their roles to the best of their ability then that is great.*
- *Comfortable delegating to both men and women.*

**Do you think hiring more women would help Oorja achieve its overall goals as an organization?**

**→ how so?**

*Respondent 1: Yes.*

- *Easier to reach female customers.*
- *Gives other women confidence compared to a male speaking to a female.*
  - *Female to female eases communication.*
  - *Male to female is challenging because the man of the household might stand next to the female and answer for her.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Employing women as operators and customers will provide them with a financial benefit as well as other benefits including convenience.*
- *Hand in hand with Oorja's mission—similar mission but targeting a different customer segment.*

- *Impact for women at a baseline would be high because they are already marginalized, less likely to own land.*
- *Providing women services would provide an even greater impact than what they are able to achieve now with their male-dominated base.*
- *When men speak to women customers they are shy than when women speak to women customers.*
- *Women are easily able to connect with women employees—speaking more openly about their experiences.*
  - *What they do every day and their concerns.*
- *Women employees can act as role models as they are employed by Oorja and doing work that those women customers might one day be able to do.*
- *More role models in this environment.*

*Respondent 4:*

- *When farmers were giving an interview to shraddha, they were very open and emotional.*
- *EQ very high for shraddha and more compassion for the questions she was asking.*
- *Chandon could only connect with men.*
- *Shraddha could connect with men and women.*
- *In parts where language is a barrier, have women in this context in a greater role.*

*Respondent 5:*

- *The assumption here is that women are more invested/empathetic.*
- *Expect women to stay longer in their roles.*
- *Turnover of men is higher.*
- *No woman has left the organization since they joined.*
- *Women who stay can help Oorja carry out their goal.*
- *Men are driven a lot by the compensation package.*
  - *So men tend to leave companies very quickly.*
- *Women CVs are seen to stay much longer in organizations.*
- *You bring on men and train them and then all of the sudden those men leave.*
- *You don't waste resources on training women because they stay and help the company grow.*

**How many women typically apply for positions within Oorja?  
(Technician?/Administrative?)**

**→Why do you think that this is the case?**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Work-from-home jobs receive better female responsiveness compared to field managers.*
- *Women don't typically apply to field positions.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Dependent on the position.*
- *Finance and accounting roles are more balanced 50-50.*
- *In other development sectors leaning development and partnership 60-70% of women.*
- *Engineering roles and operations roles which are outdoor roles like sales are around 90% women.*
- *Junior roles 1-2 years of experience.*
  - *20-30% of women.*
  - *This is specifically when the role is targeted towards a university.*
- *As a whole 20% of women.*

**What do you think could be done to attract more female applicants?  
(Technician?/Administrative?)**

*Respondent 1:*

- *Females acquire positions through other females holding that position.*
- *Get more female applicants and hire more women within field positions.*
- *Communicate the responsibilities of the field working jobs effectively.*
  - *Include the ease of transitioning from working on their own farm to working as a collection agent.*
  - *Also include the timing of the positions to ensure that they accommodate women's schedules.*
- *Enabling environment for females.*
  - *Understand the role of women in the household and the office.*
- *Education and work experience are current barriers to entry for women within fieldwork positions specifically.*
- *Oorja typically reaches out to NGOs and other governmental organizations but they weren't pulling people who would be qualified for fieldwork positions—rather higher education level candidates.*

*Respondent 2:*

- *Change the language of job descriptions.*
- *Going through the right institutions and hiring channels.*
- *Informal interviews about the role.*
  - *Remote working and salary questions.*
- *Looking within their own networks—asking current female employees to target people.*
- *Okay with wording and job description.*
- *Fewer women in the workplace.*
- *When they find female candidates they tend to be better than their male counterparts.*
- *Lots of LinkedIn and WhatsApp use.*
- *Could include in the above that they are looking specifically for female candidates.*

## **What training and education would be required for females to become technicians?**

### *Respondent 1:*

- *There is a program in place—6-12 months.*
- *Teach about how the solar mini-grid works.*
- *Preference is given to females.*
- *Trained according to Oorja's specific system.*
- *They look for people who are semi-familiar with the system.*
- *Bridge the gap between what Oorja provides and other companies.*
- *This can lead to a barrier to entry.*

### *Respondent 2:*

- *Pay more attention to developing their training plan.*
- *Pair two female team members.*
  - *Non-professional concerns can be addressed.*
  - *Like transportation and housing.*

### *Respondent 3:*

- *Organization of a weekly or monthly meeting with farmers to talk with them about crops.*

## Appendix A

### a. Employee Interview Format: Male and Female Employees

#### Female Employees

- Our purpose is to develop a gender lens to help Oorja develop policies and ways of interaction that will improve their gender equity .
- You are free to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable.
- We would like to ask for your permission to record this interview so that we can transcribe it later.
- We are transcribing these interviews but no one will ever attach your name to this information; this process will be entirely anonymous.
- This is voluntary but we would appreciate it if you could be as honest as possible .

First, tell us a little bit about your background and how that led you to work (or in Clementine's case, found) Oorja.

*Purpose: just some intro stuff to make them feel comfortable and establish a rapport with them.*

How would you describe your position at Oorja?

*Purpose: introductory information.*

Do you think there are improvements that could be made internally to make your job easier?

*Purpose: general information.*

What do you personally hope to gain from your position at Oorja?

*Purpose: ask them about their aspirations before diving into potential obstacles for them later.*

Currently, do you feel like there are any obstacles preventing you from pursuing those aspirations?

*Purpose: General information.*

When there are disagreements within the workplace, how helpful are men to ensuring all sides are heard?

*Purpose: look into gender dynamics when issues occur.*

Do you believe that gender equity is a focal point of your organization?

→ Do you believe that everyone you work with feels the same?

*Purpose: establish how important gender equity is to the company.*

Oorja obviously has HR policies and other rules that aim to prevent gender discrimination within the workplace. Do you feel like those policies are effective?

→ if anything, what could be done to improve these policies?

*Purpose: see their general opinions about how Oorja currently handles gender discrimination in the workplace.*

In terms of partnerships, Oorja works with other social enterprises and NGOs such as WE4F. If you have a meeting with male officials from those organizations and they don't show you an adequate level of respect, would you feel comfortable coming back and reporting that? To whom?

*Purpose: determine how effective/valued their gender HR services are.*

Have you ever witnessed a female being criticized for stepping outside her traditional gender role? I.e. for behaving too much like a man.

*Purpose: To understand the internal company culture.*

If there were to be more gender lens training for Oorja employees, what would you want that training to include? What do you think would be most effective/beneficial?

*Purpose: see what recommendations they have from their personal experiences.*

How are meetings generally run?

→ Are there usually designated roles within meetings in terms of who speaks when?

→ What percentage of time in meetings are men speaking and what percentage are women speaking?

→ Are women and men given equal opportunities to speak and lead discussions?

*Purpose: an opportunity for them to give their personal experiences.*

Do you think hiring more women would be beneficial to Oorja's internal workplace?

*Purpose: their thoughts on how hiring women would help the workplace*

Would hiring more women make you feel more comfortable doing your job?

→ if so, why?

*Purpose: to see again if there are holes in Oorja's general gender equity framework.*

Do you think hiring more women would help Oorja achieve its overall goals as an organization?

→ how so?

*Purpose: get them talking about other benefits of hiring more women.*

How many women typically apply for positions within Oorja? (Technician?/Administrative?)

→ Why do you think that this is the case?

*Purpose: Understand why people apply to the position and what inhibits female applicants.*

What do you think could be done to attract more female applicants? (Technician?/Administrative?)

*Purpose: see how much they've thought about how to hire more women.*

What training and education would be required for females to become technicians?

*Purpose: Understand the requirements for becoming a technician so that we can understand how to create the position.*

Are there any other final comments you have about how Oorja could become more gender inclusive?

## Male Employees

The purpose of this meeting is to interview you about your experiences within Oorja so that we can gain a greater understanding of how Oorja functions and the places where gender interventions would be most effective.

- From here we hope to develop a gender lens to help Oorja develop policies and ways of interaction that will improve their gender equity
- You are free to skip any questions that make you uncomfortable
- We would like to ask for your permission to record this interview so that we can transcribe it later.
- We are transcribing these interviews but no one will ever attach your name to this information; this process will be entirely anonymous
- This is voluntary but we would appreciate it if you could be as honest as possible

First, tell us a little bit about your background and how that led you to work (or in Clementine's case, found) Oorja.

*Purpose: just some intro stuff to make them feel comfortable and establish a rapport with them.*

How would you describe your position at Oorja?

*Purpose: introduction information.*

Do you think there are improvements that could be made internally to make your job easier?

*Purpose: see if they complain about anything.*

What do you personally hope to gain from your position at Oorja?

*Purpose: ask them about their aspirations before diving into potential obstacles for them later.*

Currently, do you feel like there are any obstacles preventing you from pursuing those aspirations?

*Purpose: General comments.*

Oorja obviously has HR policies and other rules that aim to prevent gender discrimination within the workplace. Do you feel like those policies are effective?

→ if anything, what could be done to improve these policies?

*Purpose: see their general opinions about how Oorja currently handles gender discrimination in the workplace.*

Have you ever witnessed a female being criticized for stepping outside her traditional gender role? E.g. for behaving too much like a man.

*Purpose: To understand the internal company culture.*

If you saw one of your female coworkers experiencing extreme disrespect from one or more of your male coworkers, would you feel comfortable reporting this to HR?

*Purpose: see if they would actually follow the HR policies. Again testing the effectiveness of those policies.*

Have you ever witnessed a female being criticized for stepping outside her traditional gender role? I.e. for behaving too much like a man.

*Purpose: To understand the internal company culture.*

How are meetings generally run?

→ Are there usually designated roles within meetings in terms of who speaks when?

→ Are women and men given equal opportunities to speak and lead discussions?

*Purpose: an opportunity for them to give their personal experiences.*

Do you think hiring more women would be beneficial to Oorja's internal workplace?

*Purpose: their thoughts on how hiring women would help the workplace.*

Would hiring more women make you feel more or less comfortable doing your job? Explain.

*Purpose: to see again if there are holes in Oorja's general gender equity framework.*

Do you think hiring more women would help Oorja achieve its overall goals as an organization?

→ how so?

*Purpose: get them talking about other benefits of hiring more women.*

Are there any other final comments you have about how Oorja could become more gender inclusive?