

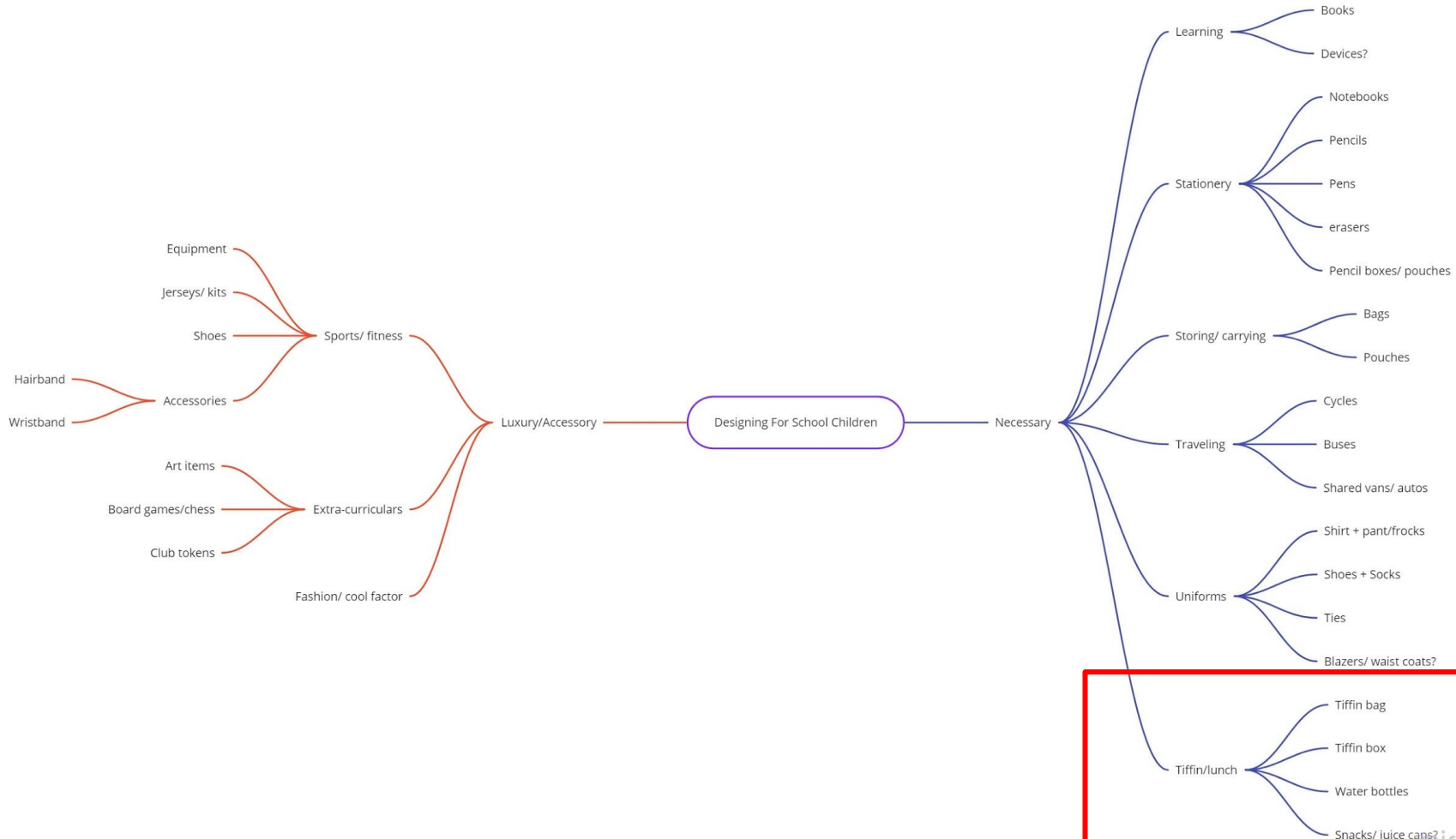
# Designing for **DABBAWALAS**

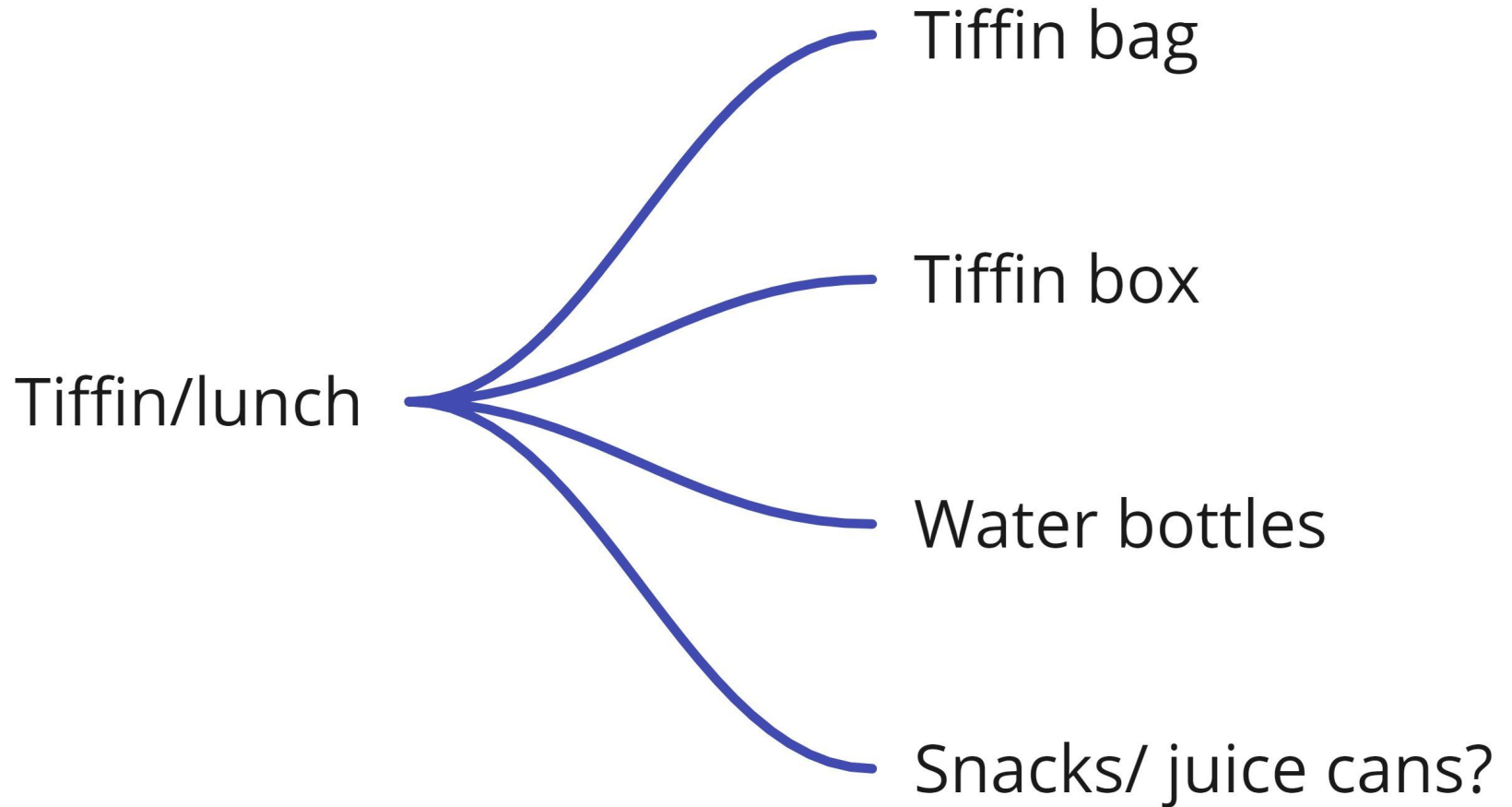


**Initial**

**Brainstorming**







**DABBAWALAS**



## Who are the **DABBAWALAS**

- Century old organisation
- integral part of Mumbai's workforce
- deliver home-cooked food to office goers

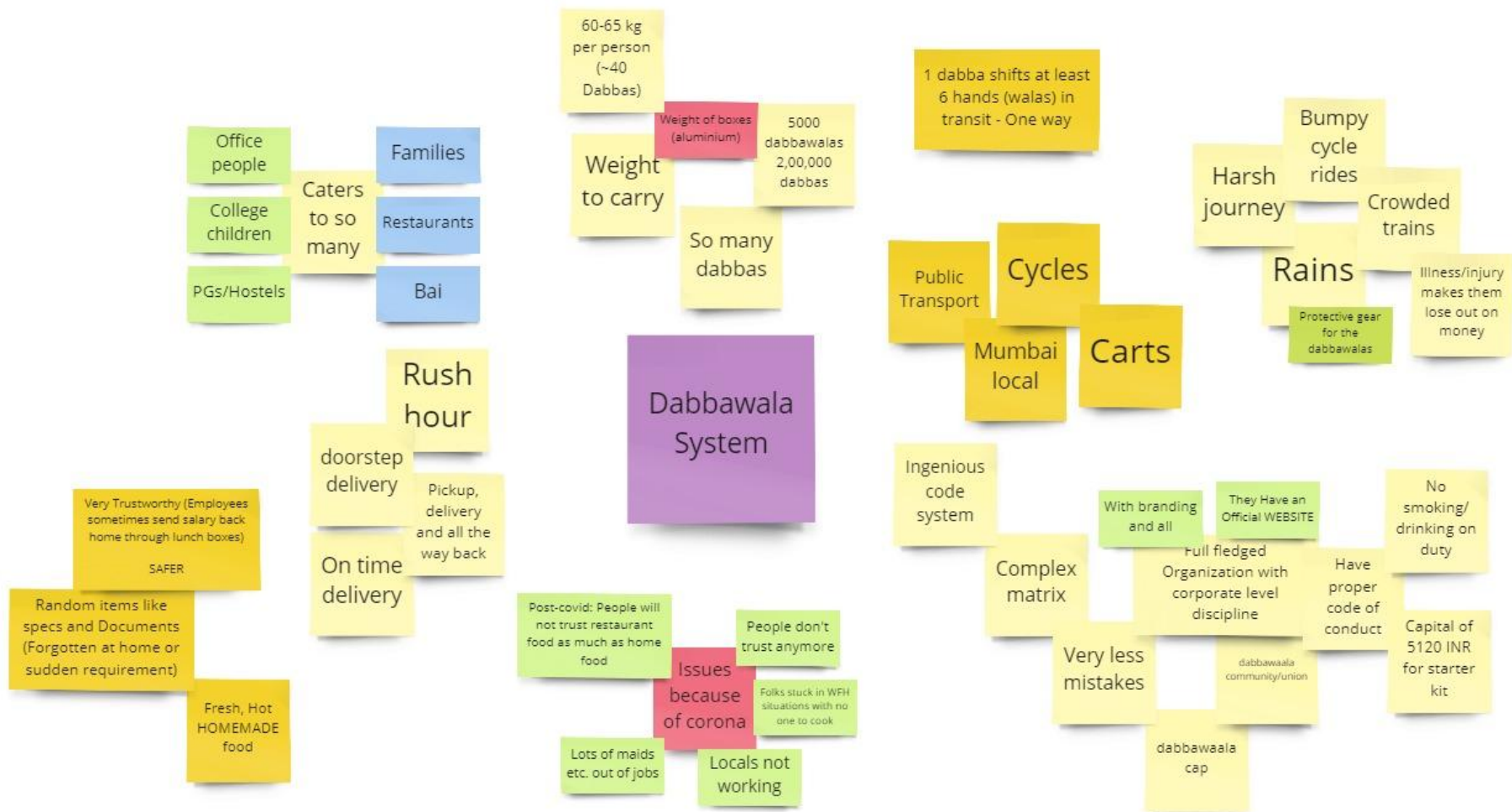




# Why **DABBAWALAS**

- Affected community - lost jobs due to covid
- Will need to restart once the world starts back up

# Understanding the **DABBAWALAS**



# **Secondary Research**

# Secondary Research



**Books, Papers &  
Case studies**

- Feeding the City: Work and Food Culture Of The Mumbai Dabbawalas - **Sara Roncaglia**
- Mumbai lunch box delivery system: A transferable benchmark in urban logistics? - **Deepak Baidur a, Rosário M. Macário**
- Dabbawala: Introducing Technology to the Dabbawalas of Mumbai - **Abhishek Chakraborty, Akshay Hargude**

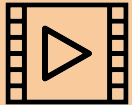
# Secondary Research



## TEDx & Documentaries

- TEDxSSN - *Dr. Pawan Agrawal* - Mumbai Dabbawalas
- THE DABBAWALA : A documentary film
- A Day In The Life Of Mumbai's Dabbawalas

# Secondary Research



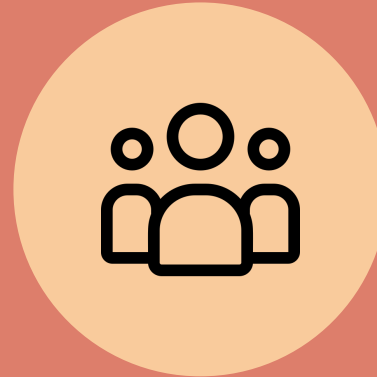
**Official Website**

[www.mumbaidabbawala.in](http://www.mumbaidabbawala.in)

# Primary Research- The Stakeholders



**Dabbawalas**



**Customers**



# Interpreting the Research

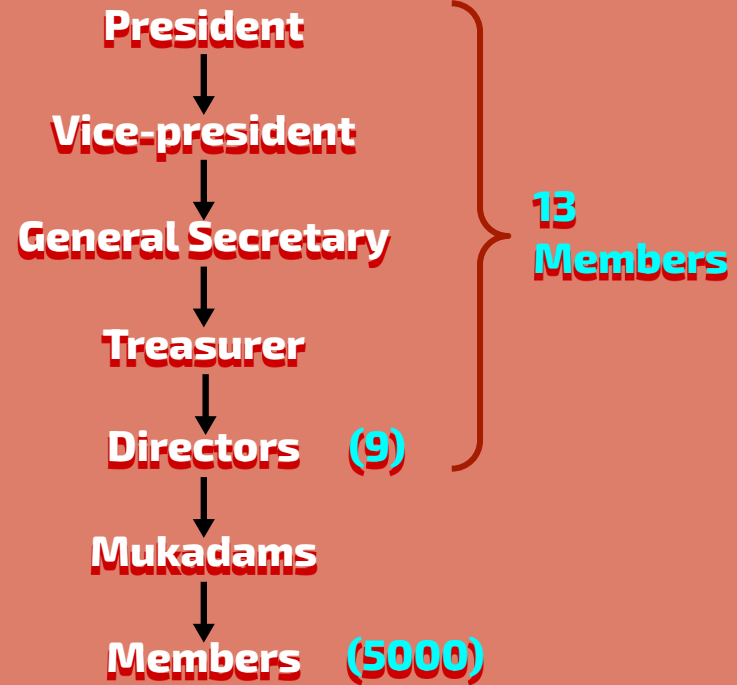
# Mumbai Dabbawala

## The Brand

- Century old organisation
- Unionized under the *Nutan Mumbai Tiffin Box Suppliers Trust*
- They are identified by their uniforms



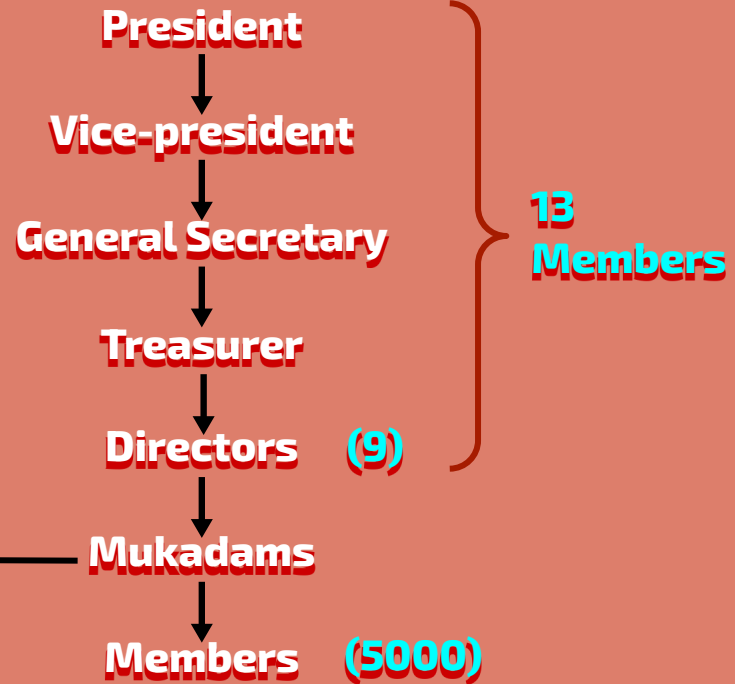
# Organisational Structure



# Organisational Structure

Mukadams are group leaders for the delivery men, who take responsibility for a particular region.

They don't earn extra, they take up the extra work as an honour.



# The DABBAWALA Discipline

- Very Reliable; Very Efficient
- 3.4 defects in a million
- On-time
- Affordable - 350-500 Rs/month

## Code of Conduct

**Rs 500 - Drinking on duty**

**Rs 100 - Smoking on duty**

**Rs 25 - Not wearing white cap**

**Rs 25 - Not carrying ID card**

**Rs 1000 - Leave without indication, sacked if repeated 2-3 times**

# The DABBAWALA Trust

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- Gained respect from all sections of people, irrespective of any social/economic differences

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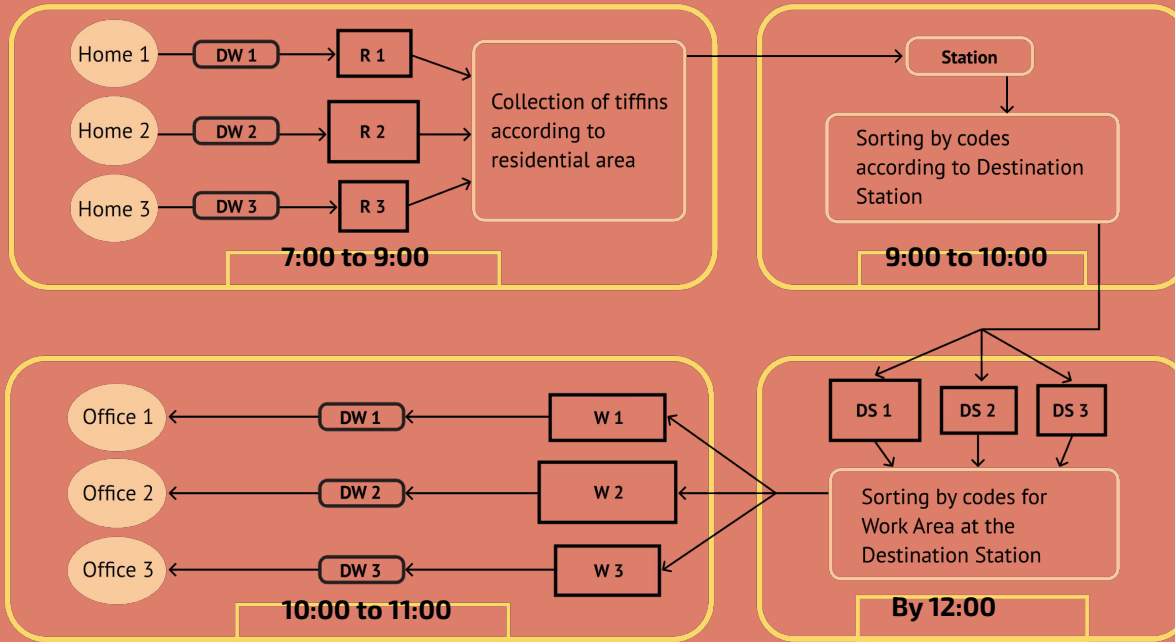
Customers trust the Dabbawalas with valuables like important documents, personal belongings, and even their monthly salary

# Cultural Background

- Most of the dabbawalas belong to the Varkari sect of Maharashtra, and the community is known to be close-knit
- Handed over to family members, sometimes back from their villages
- They see themselves as a 'Maratha' people, "Shivaji soldiers"
- They consider the act of serving food, or serving the community, in general, as an act of godliness



# Sequence Model



DW - Dabbawala

R - Residential Area

DS - Destination Station

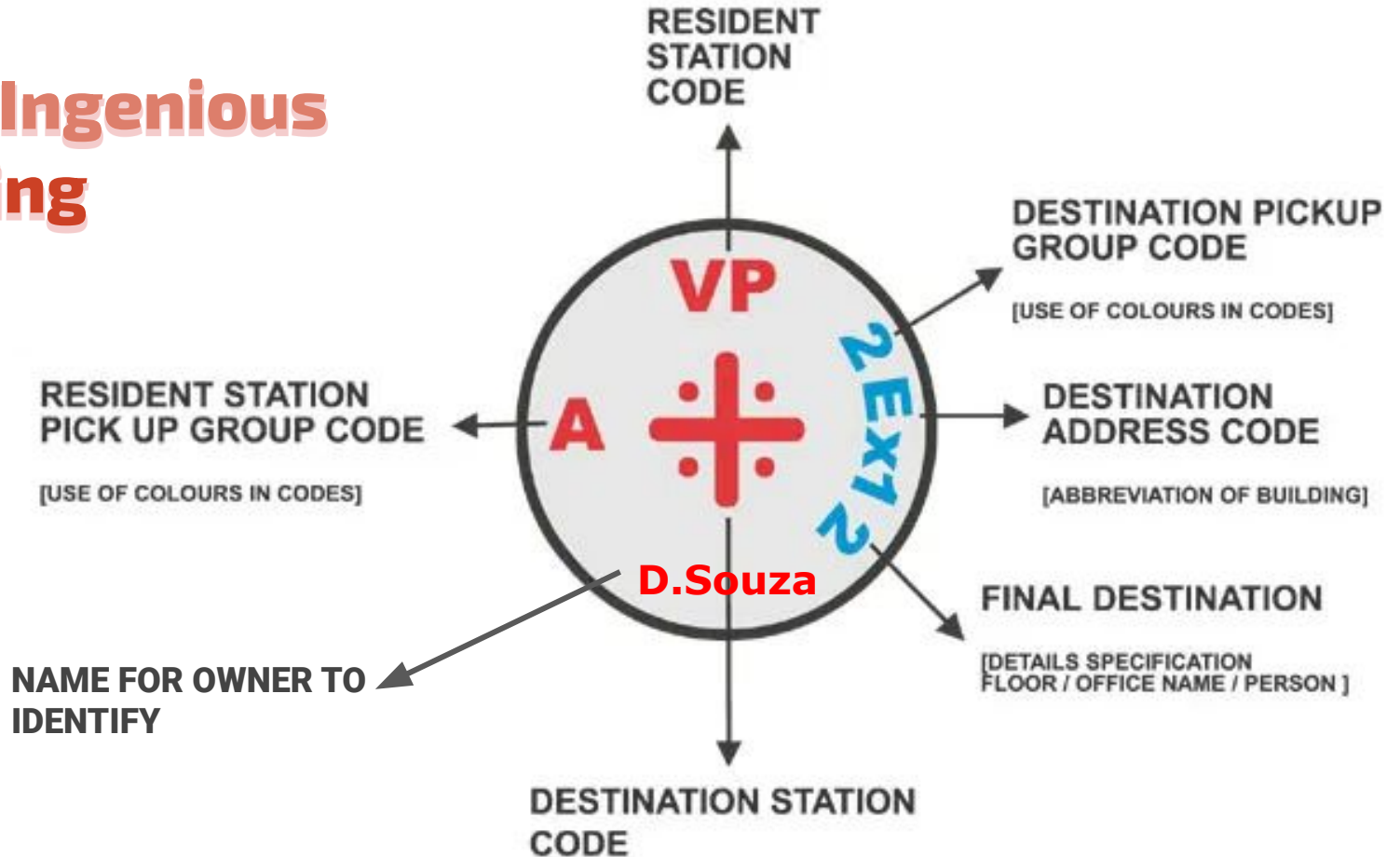
W - Work Areas

# The Dabba

- Protects the contents from harsh conditions
- Logistically convenient - Hung from cycles, stacked...
- Code painted on top



# The Ingenious Coding



# Finance

- They take home almost 95% of their income
- Compulsory donation to trust - 0.3%
- The rest is used for regular maintenance and rail passes

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- Compulsory donation to trust - 0.3%
- The rest is used for regular maintenance and rail passes

A minimum capital in kind, in the form of two bicycles, a wooden crate for the tiffins, white cotton kurta-pyjamas, and the white Gandhi cap (topi)

**~= Rs 5200**

# New Customers

- Almost all new connections are through word of mouth
- Recent entry into the digital media, but still not popular
- In most cases, people find them by their uniforms and approach them

# Key Insights

- 5,000 dabbawalas, 2,00,000 dabbas
- 60-65 kg per person (~40 Dabbas)
- A lot of direct interaction/contact
- **1 dabba shifts at least 6 hands (dabbawalas) in a one way transit**

# Identifying Problems



# The **Post-COVID** Complications

- Lot of contact
- Less customers - 9/10 customers discontinued
- Lack of trust
- Personal safety - socio-economic vulnerability

# Competition

- Digital coverage
- Advertisements on safety measures
- Loss of popularity
- Consumeristic attitude of new generation

# Inherent Problems

- Harsh sun - heavy rains - long journeys
- Heavy metallic boxes

# Identified Areas for Design Intervention

- Building consumer trust again - advertising safety measures
- Personal safety
- Packaging - Brand establishment
- Newer markets - new suppliers

# Initial Design Ideas

# Dabbawala Initial Design Ideas

Semi  
digital Id  
Cards?

Aarogya  
setu App  
integration  
(Coz modi)

New protective  
uniform  
(white & white  
obviously)

Website/app?

This is because of the  
reducing popularity of  
the dabbawalas and  
other businesses

Self  
Advertising  
(on the  
packaging)

Great way to  
do outreach

New 'Safe'  
packaging

Prominent  
Branding

**Thank You**