

# Behavioural Climate Action: The Missing Link in Sustainability

Presented by Neha Devapuja



- Every year, we produce 400 million tonnes of plastic.
- We recycle less than 10%.
- It's not because people don't care - It's because systems aren't designed for how people behave.



# System Design vs. Human Design

System-First	Behaviour-First
Infrastructure heavy	Human insight heavy
Enforcement	Empowerment
Short-term compliance	Long-term culture change

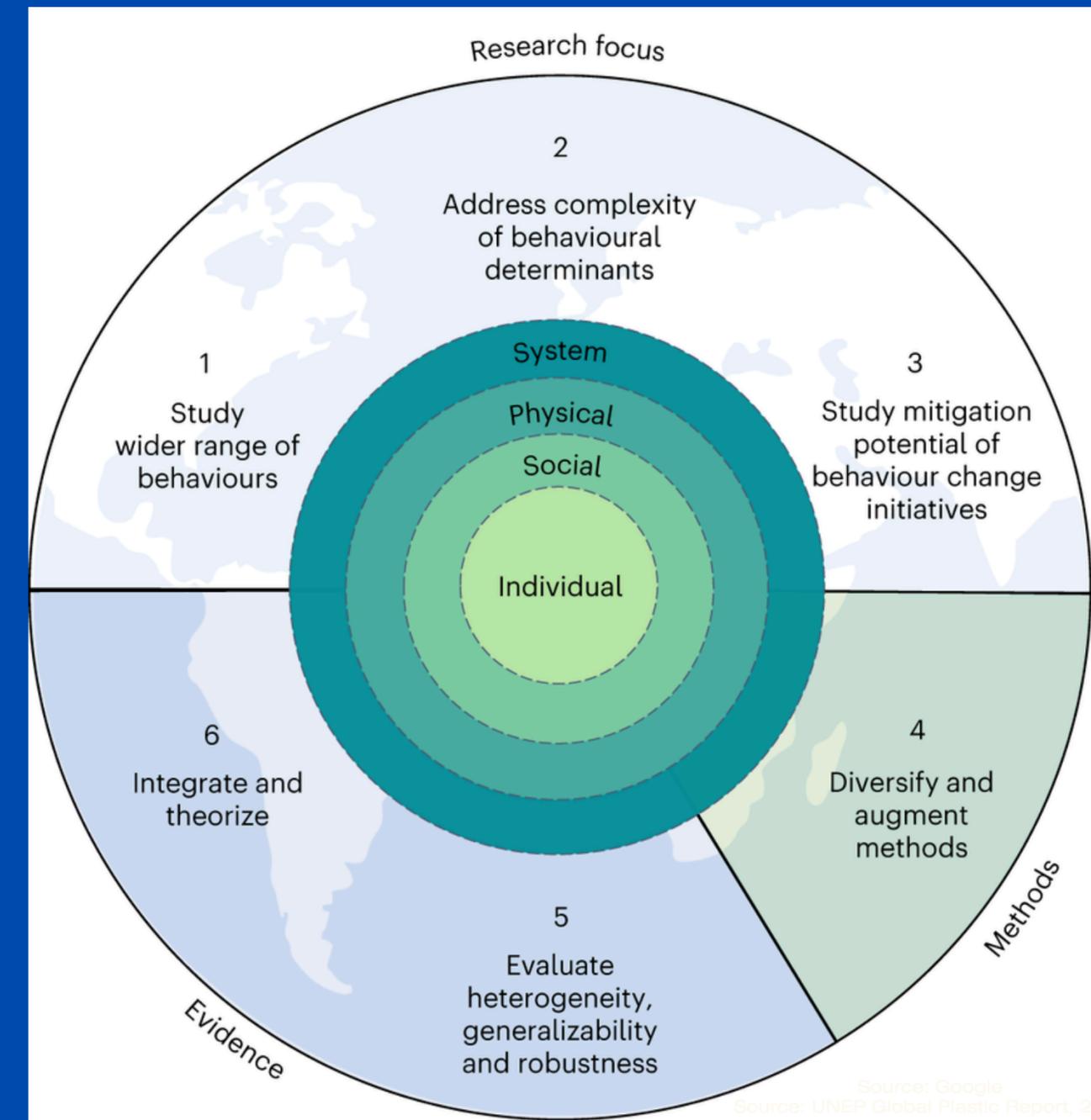


# The Behaviour Deficit in Global Climate Policy.

Policy ≠ participation | Awareness ≠ action  
Infrastructure ≠ adoption

- Climate strategies focus on infrastructure readiness, not human readiness.
- Billions are spent on awareness campaigns that don't shift daily habits.
- Implementation collapses when systems meet social complexity.

The climate crisis isn't just ecological  
It's behavioural, cultural, and cognitive.



# Enter DRS: Behaviour in Design

- You pay a small deposit when buying a bottle.
- You get it back when you return it.
- 90%+ collection in countries like Germany & Norway.

## How to Design an Effective Deposit Return System

How the System Works



Regions with deposit return systems collect for recycling almost three times as many cans and bottles as regions without. Deposit systems are a tax-free tool to recycle virtually 100% of cans and bottles collected.

## The Four Principles of High-Performing Deposit Systems

### Performance

A collection target for all beverages plus a meaningful deposit delivers strong results.

### Convenience

The redemption system is easy, accessible and fair for everyone.

### System Integrity

Trust is built into the system's processes through transparent management, a data-driven clearinghouse, and reliable redemption technology.

### Producer Responsibility

Producers finance and invest in the system using the unredeemed deposits, commodity revenues, and an eco-modulated EPR fee.



# Behavioural Circularity in India

Case studies

From sacred mountains to the open seas



# Deposit Refund System in Kedarnath

At 11,000 ft, one of India's holiest pilgrimage routes faced a mounting plastic crisis from over 56 lakh annual visitors.

- 20 lakh bottles collected and recycled.
- 66 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> saved.
- 110 jobs created, with 37.5% income increase in the informal sector.
- ₹3.73 crore saved in government waste-handling costs.
- 21% rise in proper waste-disposal behaviour among pilgrims.



# Coastal Fishermen Turning Waste into Wealth

India's 7,500 km coastline faces rising marine plastic due to unmanaged waste near rivers and coastal zones.

Fishermen's nets often return entangled with plastic, causing engine damage, income loss (up to 60%), and degraded fishing zones

Impact:

- 70+ tonnes of waste recovered in 6 months, Plastic sent to recycling partners via traceable supply chains.
- Income boosted by ₹2,500–₹3,000/month.
- Communities gained dignity, visibility, and voice.

“When livelihoods and ecosystems align, behaviour becomes unstoppable.”



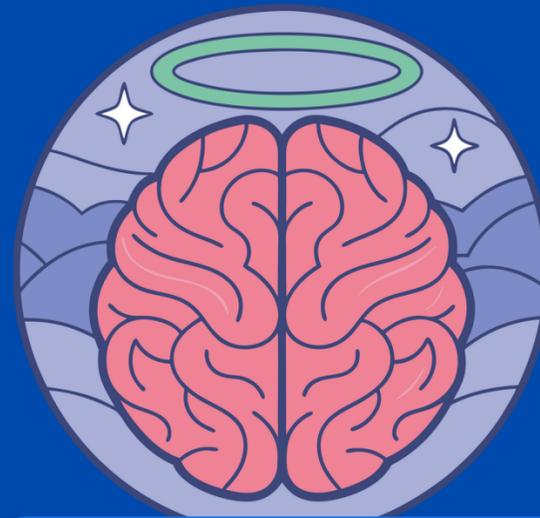
# The Science of Change

## Three principles:



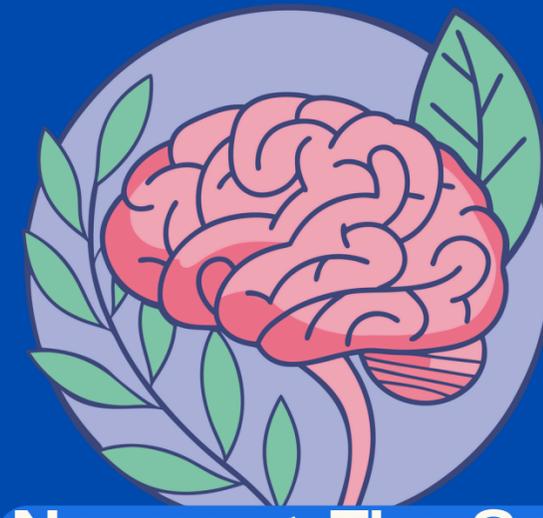
### Identity → The Cognitive Anchor

People protect what defines them  
embed sustainability into who they  
are, not what they do.



### Incentive → The Dopamine Loop

Instant, visible rewards drive lasting  
change far more than distant moral  
appeals.



### Norms → The Social Multiplier

When sustainable behaviour becomes  
visible and shared, it spreads faster than  
policy.

# The Takeaway

Design with people, not for them.

Turn awareness into action.

Make behaviour the core of sustainability.



**“If we want to  
change the world,  
we must first  
understand what  
changes people.”**

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