

An Open Defecation Free Initiative: A Tribute to the Sacredness of Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar



Mount Kailash and Lake Manasarovar are highly revered as sacred places of worship by four major religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, and pre-Buddhist animistic Bon). The landscape has numerous monasteries and retreat sites. It is also a headwater source of four major Asian rivers (Sutlej, Karnali, Brahmaputra and Indus). These aspects of the landscape require it to be clean and free of pollution. Proper sanitation and clean surroundings are also essential for promoting tourism that provides local livelihood co-benefits.

Unfortunately, lack of awareness on hygiene and sanitation among local populations and tour operators are contributing to the pollution of the sacred Mount Kailash kora and the holy Lake Manasarovar. Open defecation is common which increases the incidences of spreading waterborne diseases. This is also a threat to the health of local inhabitants, visitors as well as people and animals living downstream of rivers.

As a tribute to the sacredness of the holy mountain, the Kailash Sacred Landscape Conservation and Development Initiative supported an “open-defecation-free” program using the community led total sanitation approach. A series of motivational and sensitization events were organized, including a training of trainers and mentorship trips of local leaders to Mainland China and the European Alps to experience best practices in sanitation and waste management. These efforts act as catalyst for an increased understanding and gave momentum to keep the Kailash Sacred Landscape clean.

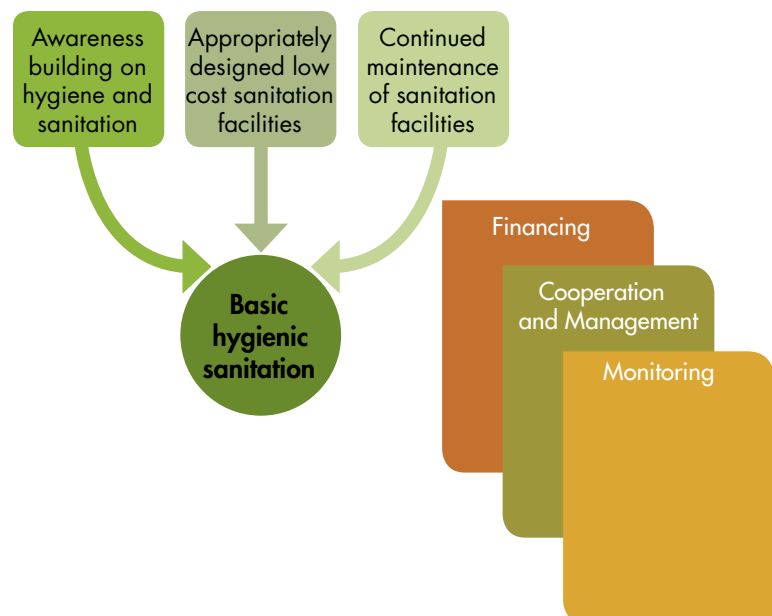
Concept of ‘Community Led Total Sanitation’ (CLTS)

(cited from <http://www.communityledtotalsanitation.org/page/clts-approach>)

Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) is an innovative methodology for mobilizing communities to completely eliminate open defecation (OD). Communities are facilitated to conduct their own appraisal and analysis of OD and take their own action to become open defecation free (ODF).

CLTS focuses on the behavioral change – investing in community mobilization and motivation instead of hardware, and shifting the focus from toilet construction for individual households to the creation of ODF villages. CLTS triggers the community’s desire for collective change by raising awareness. It propels people into action and encourages innovation, mutual support, and appropriate local solutions, thus leading to greater ownership and sustainability.

Sanitation management building on the concept of ‘Community Led Total Sanitation’



Sanitation Priorities for Kailash landscape	What has been done?	What next?
Awareness building about hygiene and sanitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government officials and community members sensitised on connection between hygiene, sanitation, and health Awareness on the importance of proper sanitation has increased Rules regarding sanitation have been set up in several villages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Form/strengthen sanitation groups to continue awareness in other communities in Pulan county Strengthen rules to discourage open defecation Put up signs to point to the toilets Have a sanitation day at local schools Campaign for an open defecation free county Engage tour operators and encourage them to educate their clients about the issue and corresponding behaviour
Appropriately designed low cost sanitation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More toilets have been constructed by communities and government agencies in the landscape At least one toilet per seven families is available in every township 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage township government and communities to set up more toilets per families Demonstrate proper sheltered pit toilets because most of the toilets are open pit toilets that do not prevent spreading of disease and odour
Continued maintenance of sanitation facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Household toilets are kept relatively clean Increased adoption of toilets by local people (traditionally used to defecation in the vast open rangelands) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Put mechanism for cleanliness and maintenance of public toilets in place Employ local community members to maintain and clean toilets along the Kora routes on a regular basis Develop a concept to integrate human waste into manure as business
Financing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Government subsidies and household labour contribution to trigger initial toilet initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Include costs of toilet set up and maintenance along the Kora route in travel packages Use governmental schemes to finance further sanitation infrastructure
Cooperation and Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local government, Tibet Tourism Co. Ltd Ali Branch, and communities are working together for ODF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen partnerships and include more stakeholders in other parts of Pulan County
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communities have set up toilet guards in Huor Town for ODF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen community based monitoring to achieve/maintain ODF in Kailash landscape

Photo comparison of sanitation management in Huor Township

Location	2014	2016
Huor Town – toilet maintenance systems established for regular cleaning		

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For Further Information

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