

Project Update: November 2014

Tribal communities in villages (largely non-literate community): Field (digging) interactive demonstrations were held in 15+ localities. In total about 200 people were given an opportunity to see live caecilians, see the breeding sites of caecilians, observe their natural history, such as where eggs are laid, how big they are, how the embryos / babies look and behave, what the subterranean nests look like and at what depth, their proximity to water sources how the mothers brood their eggs, etc. Participants were mostly fascinated by how one could see the “babies” through the egg membranes. They appreciated how much more vulnerable the eggs and babies were because they do not have protective shell. Many participants of the demonstration programme had the rare opportunity to handle live caecilians. This was widely successful in dispelling the widespread irrational fear of caecilians typically wrongly perceived to be venomous.

Literate community: I addressed 500+ people, most of which were school children (aged 9–17), and all levels of state forest department officials of four north-east states. Children were absolutely thrilled to learn about caecilians and had endless questions. Forest officers equally found the caecilians awareness interactive talks an “eye opener and extremely interesting” – their amazement at how a group of animals could be so poorly known and understood biologically was expressed regularly.

More than 95% (of approximately 700 people audience) learned about caecilians for the first time and mostly expressed willingness to be more sympathetic to caecilians.



RG Kamei, Forest Academy field demonstration and popular talk