
MANCALA: THE DAWN OF GAMING

An Ancient African Board Game & Modern Computers



Thousands of years ago, mankind discovered agriculture and began to settle down into villages. All of a sudden, it became important to divide and share space for farms and houses in a planned way. The map of an agricultural field or human settlement would have been drawn into the soil with a stick, and stones placed as markers. It takes only one more leap of imagination to create the first board game by assigning rules for the movement of these stones across the map. One such game that has survived all the wars and ravages of world history is Mancala, the 'seeding game'.

The rules of mancala are very simple, but the dynamics are elegant and somewhat complex. With some fiddling, it may be shown to be "Turing-complete", which means it can simulate any computer algorithm. Taken to its logical limits, the rules of a game are simply the laws of physics that govern its universe; a board game is an entire cosmology. Modern research in mancala and its sibling games involves the use of artificial intelligence to play against and beat a human being (or another computer!).

This interactive workshop introduces the mathematics of Mancala, known to Tamilians as Pallanguzhi, and to Kannadigas as Alugulimane. The workshop will be conducted by mathematician Rohit Gupta and hosted by the Kavade Toy Hive, makers of Traditional Games and handicrafts.

Host: KAVADE is a niche Toy Hive in Bangalore which strives to promote traditional, value enriched learning through games without moving too far away from nature. **'Kavade'** in kannada means **"Cowrie Shells"**. The Toy Hive has aligned with self-help groups working with natural materials for a sustainable livelihood. They also conduct regular workshops and learning activities.

Web: www.kavade.org FB: [facebook.com/KavadeToyHive](https://www.facebook.com/KavadeToyHive)

Convenor: Rohit Gupta is a mathematician working in the area of 'group theory' which is a fundamental part of physics, puzzles and cryptography. He is also a columnist for the Sunday Guardian newspaper and tweets as @fadesingh

Date and Time: 3rd September, 2011 (Saturday). 11AM-5PM (with a 2 hour lunch break from 1-3 PM)

Venue: KAVADE TOY HIVE, Bangalore
#143, CKN Chambers, 1st Main, Seshadripuram, Bangalore-20

Registration: Rs. 1200/- The seats are limited to 20 people. You may register in advance with cash at the shop if you're near Seshadripuram, or just pay on arrival. An offer of 50% discount to the participants for selected gameboards at KAVADE

Contact: Sreeranjini (09980022820) or Rohit (09784709366) for queries.

