

Discussion Draft

**Basics of Veda Swaras
and Vedic Recital-05**

Chandas

Version 0.0

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1 Veda Basics – Chandas

1.1 Introduction:

“Chanda” (छन्दः) refers to how the poetry or verse is constructed in terms of certain well defined rules. The English reference word is ‘meter’. A Chandas (**Chanda:**) has a rule of how many aksharas or there in a Chandas and how it is distributed into distinct parts /legs/Paadams. A person conversant with Tamil Grammar would know the specific area of “Yappilakkanam” (the grammar of poetry). Chandas represents a similar grammatical construction of poetry in Sanskrit. Chandas is one of the six main parts (angas) of Veda. There are a number of Chandas used in poetry and Vedas.

1.2 The Main Seven Chandas:

The Main Seven Chandas used in Sanskrit Poetry/Vedas are:

1. **Gayatri**: This Chandas has 24 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza/mantra divided into 3 Paadas (parts/legs) of 8 Letters/Aksharas.
2. **Ushnik** : This Chandas has 28 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza/mantra divided into 4 Paadas of 7 Letters/Aksharas

3. **Anustup**: This Chandas has 32 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza/ mantra divided into 4 Paadas of 8 Letters/Aksharas. Most of the Slokas in typical classical Sanskrit uses this Chandas, most often recited being Vishnu Sahasranamam and Lalitha Sahasranamam.
4. **Brihati** : This Chandas has 36 Letters/Aksharas in each stanzas or mantra divided into four 4 Paadas (8 + 8 + 12 + 8) Letters/Aksharas.
5. **Pankti** : This Chandas has 40 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza divided into 4 Paadas of 10 Letters each (sometimes 5 Padas of 8 letters each)
6. **Tristup**: This Chandas has 44 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza divided into 4 Paadas of 11 Letters/Aksharas.
7. **Jagati**: This Chandas has 48 Letters/Aksharas in each stanza divided into 4 Paadas of 12 Letters/Aksharas.

Each of these Chandas has specific rules for how the akshara/letter patterns are formed. We limit our discussions to basic understanding of Gayatri and Anushtup Chandas only as these are often used. As our team studies more about other Chandas and right examples are found in the common area/subjects of Vedic recital in Krishna Yajur Veda, a discussion note will be prepared for the mutual benefit of Veda learners.

1.2.1 PraNava Nyasa Reference:

During Sandya vandanam, we pray/remember/thank main seven Chandas during PraNavanyasa as follows:

प्रणवन्यासः

प्रणवस्य ऋषिर् ब्रह्मा, देवी गायत्रिच्छन्दः , परमात्मा देवता ॥

भूरादि सप्त व्याहतीनाम् - अत्रि- भृगु-कुत्स-वसिष्ठ-गौतम- काश्यप-
अङ्गिरस ऋषयः ॥

गायत्री-उष्णिक्-अनुष्टुप्- बृहती- पङ्की- तृष्टुप्- जगत्यश्-छन्दाप्सि ॥

अग्नि-वायु-अर्क्क-वागीस- वरुण- इन्द्र- विश्वे देवा- देवता ॥

ப்ரணவந்யாஸ:

ப்ரணவஸ்ய ருஷிர் ப்₃ரஹ்மா, தே₃வீ கா₃யத்ரிச்ச₂ந்த: ,
பரமாத்மா தே₃வதா ॥

பூ₄ராதி₃ ஸப்த வ்யாஹ்ருதீனாம் - அத்ரி- ப்₄ருகு-குத்ஸ-
வஸிஷ்ட-கௌ₃தம- காஸ்யப-அங்கிரஸ ருஷய: ॥

கா₃யத்ரீ-உஷ்ணிக்-அனுஷ்டுப்-ப்₃ருஹதீ- பங்க்தீ- த்ருஷ்டுப்-
ஜகத்யஸ்-சந்தாம்ஸி ॥

அக்₃னி-வாயு-அர்க்க-வாகீ₃ஸ- வருண- இந்த்₃ர- விஸ்வே
தே₃வா- தே₃வதா ||

ப്രണവന്യസഃ

ப്രணவஸ்ய ஜ்ஷிர்₂₀ ஸ்ரஹா, டேவீ ஸாயத்ரி₂₀பந: ,

பரமா₂₀ டேவதா ||

டூரா₂₀நி ஸஹ வ்யாஹு₂₀தீ₂₀நா₂₀ - ஸத்ரி- டூ₂₀ஹு-கூ₂₀ஸ-வஸி₂₀ஷ்ட-
ஸாத₂₀- கா₂₀ஸ்ய₂₀ப-ஸ₂₀ஷ்₂₀ஶிர₂₀ஸ ஜ்ஷய: ||

ஸாயத்ரி-உ₂₀ஷ்₂₀ஶிக்-ஸ₂₀நு₂₀ஷ்டு₂₀ப்-ஸ்ய₂₀ஹ₂₀தீ- பக்₂₀தீ- து₂₀ஷ்டு₂₀ப்-
ஜ₂₀ஶத்ய₂₀ஸ்-உ₂₀நா₂₀ஸி ||

ஸ₂₀ஶி-வாயு-ஸ₂₀க்₂₀-வா₂₀ஶீ₂₀ஸ- வ₂₀ரு₂₀ஸ- ஸ₂₀ந₂₀- வி₂₀ஸே

டே₂₀வா- டே₂₀வதா ||

The main principle that we touch our head indicating remember/thank the rishi who gave the mantra, touch the area above the mouth to remember that the chandas be in your mouth(meaning proper recital) and touch the heart, the Devata(s) who is/are worshipped be always in your heart. Nyasam is the practice to concentrate your main and bring in the spiritual forces you are worshipping into your Self.

Reader may also note that in the Eleventh Chapter of Chamakam reference to “gift of verse “is made from “**Chaturvigmsatischa me to Ashtachatvaarigmscha me**” indicating these seven Chandas. (24,28,32,36,40,44,48)

2 Gayatri Chandas

2.1 Introduction

Gayatri Chandas has been very often used in composing Gayatris for various Devathas. The Chandas seems to get its name from the Gayatri Mantra which follows Gayatri Chandas. The normal Gayatri Chandas in its original form has 24 letters of 3 Paadams of 8 letters each. The normal recital shall be made as 2+1 Paadams and many books mark the separator accordingly. Some schools insist on recital by each Paadam. That is each Ruk consists of eight letters and there must be distinct pause between Paadams.

There are many variants of Gayatri Chandas. They are generally referred to as NiSrut Gayatri Chandas. The meaning of the word “NiSrut” stands for untie or loosen. But scholars interpret it as **modified** Gayatris. Letters may vary from the standard Gayatri Chandas, example 22 letters, 25 letters and 26 letters. Then the method of recital is also defined by the Composing Rishi/Saint/Poet.

First we shall see some examples of Gayatri Chandas.

2.2 Examples from Known Areas

2.2.1 Examples of Gayatri Mantra

ओं त थ्स^१ वि तु-र्व^२ रे ण्यं । (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

भ र्गो^१ दे व स्य^१ धी म हि । (Paadam 2)

धि यो यो^१ नः प्र चो द यात्^२ ॥ (Paadam 3)

ஓம் த த்₂ஸ¹ வி துர் வ ரே^{||} ண்யம் | (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ப₄ ர்கோ¹₃ தே₃ வ ஸ்ய¹ தீ₄ ம ஹி | (Paadam 2)

தி₄ யோ¹ யோ ன: ப்ர சோ¹ த₃ யாத்^{||} || (Paadam 3)

ஓம் த ம்ஸ¹ வி துர் வ ரே^{||} ண்யம் | (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ப ர்ஸோ¹ னே வ ஸ்ய¹ யீ ம ஹி | (Paadam 2)

யி யோ¹ யோ ன: ப்ர சோ¹ த₃ யாத்^{||} || (Paadam 3)

2.2.2 Examples of Gayatrees of Other Devata

त त्पु रु षा य वि ष ह॑ - व क्र तु ण्डा य धी म हि ।

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

त न्नो द न्तिः प्र चो द यात् ॥

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

யு த்பு ரு ஷா ய வி த்₃ம ஹே¹

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

வ க்ர து ண்டா₃ ய தீ₄ ம ஹி |

த ந்நோ¹ த₃ ந்தி: ப்ர சோ¹ த₃ யாத்^{||} ||

ത ത്പു രു ഷാ യ വി ദ്മ ഹേ
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 ച ക്ര തു ണ്യാ യ ധീ മ ഹി ।
 ത ന്നോ ദ ന്തിഃ പ്ര ചോ ദ യാത് ॥

തത്പുരുഷായ വിद्മഹേ महादेवाय धीमहि । तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥

नारायणाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि । तन्नो विष्णुः प्रचोदयात् ॥

തത്പുരുഷായ വിத்₃മഹേ മഹാദേവായ തീ₄മഹി ।
 തന്നോ രുദ്₃ഃ പ്രശോത₃യാത് ॥
 നാരായണായ വിத்₃മഹേ വാസുദേവായ തീ₄മഹി ।
 തന്നോ വിഷ്ണുഃ പ്രശോത₃യാത് ॥

തത്പുരുഷായ വിദ്മഹേ महादेवाय धीमहि ।
 തന്നോ रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥
 नारायणाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि ।
 തന്നോ विष्णुഃ പ്രചോദയാത് ॥

Now please check the other two Gayatris of Rudra and Vishnu. They follow the same form and pattern. Many a times the swaram acquisition shall be very similar.

2.3 Examples of Other Gayatris

व॒ ज॒ न॒ खा॑ य॒ वि॒ द्वा॑ हे॒ ती॒ क्ष॒ण-द॒ष्टा॑ य॒ धी॑ म॒ हि॒ ।
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
 त॒ न्नो॑ ना॒ र॒ सि॒ हः॑ प्र॒ चो॑ द॒ यात्॑ ॥
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Note: Total letters 26 ; third paadam has 10 to accomodate the name of the Devata.

व॒ ज॒ न॒ का॒ य॒ वि॒ त्म॑ षो॒
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 त॒ क्ण॑ त॒ ष्ट॑ र्वा॒ य॒ त्म॑ म॒ णि॑ ।
 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16
 த॒ ந்நோ॑ நா॒ ர॒ ஸி॑ ஹ: ப்ர॒ சோ॑ த॒ யாத்॑ ॥
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Note: Total letters 26 ; third paadam has 10 to accomodate the name of the Devata.

வ ங் க வ ய வி ற் ஹ
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

தீ க்ஷ்ண ன் ஸ்ரீ ய யி ம ஹி ।
 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

த ன்நா நா ர ஸிஃ ஹ ஸ்ரீ ஶ்ரீ ஶ்ரீ யாந் ||
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Note: Total letters 26 ; third paadam has 10 to accommodate the name of the Devata.

भा स्क् रा य वि ब्र हे म ह द्यु ति क रा य धी म हि ।
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

त न्नो आ दित्यः प्र चो द यात् ||
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Note: Total letters 26 ; First and Second paadams together has 17 letters (instead of 16) and the third paadam has one more letter. (9 instead of 8)

பா₄ ஸ்க ரா ய வி த்₃ம ஹே
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ம ஹ த்₃த்₃ய தி க ரா ய த்₄ ம ஹி ।

8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17
 த ன்நோ ஆ தி₃ த்ய: ப்ர சோ த்₃ யாந் ||
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Note: Total letters 26 ; First and Second paadams together has 17 letters (instead of 16) and the third paadam has one more letter. (9 instead of 8)

ഭാ സു രാ യ വി ദ്മ ഹേ
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

മ ഹ ദ്യു തി ക രാ യ ധീ മ ഹി ।
 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

ത നോ ആ ദി തൃഃ പ്ര ചോ ദ യാത് ||
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9

Note: Total letters 26 ; First and Second paadam together has 17 letters (instead of 16) and the third paadam has one more letter. (9 instead of 8)

It is important to note that Veda mantras are more like poetry and the defined rules of grammar may not be always followed. Vedas are said to be older than the times scholars see the definition/emergence of modern Sanskrit grammar and related rules.

The Gayatris with different aksharas other than 24 letters have different names.

The rishi who composed the mantra has a definite way to express the meaning.

Then they also teach their students as to how the verse shall be recited.

In modern times, we see many variants of Gayatri for various types of Deities, Sidda Purushas and also Gurus. The level of acceptance is different amongst Vedic Schools.

3 Anushtup Chandas

3.1 Examples from known areas

3.1.1 Vishnusahasranamam

विष्णु सहस्रनाम स्तोत्र - श्लोक १

वि श्वम् वि ष्णुर्-व ष ट्का रो (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

भू त भ व्य भ व त्प्र पुः । (Paadam 2) the Ruk Ends.

भू त कृत् भू त भृ द्वा वो (Paadam 3)

भू ता त्मा भू त भा व नः ॥ (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ॥

விஷ்ணு ஸஹஸ்ரநாம ஸ்தோத்ர - ஸ்லோகம் 1

வி ஸ்வம் வி ஷ்ணுர் - வ ஷ ட்கா ரோ

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 (Paadam 1)

பூ₄ த ப₄ வ்ய ப₄ வ த்₄ப்ர பு: | (Paadam 2)

பூ₄ த க்₄ருத் பூ₄ த ப்₄ருத்₃ பா₄ வோ (Paadam 3)

பூ₄ தா த்₄மா பூ₄ த பா₄ வ ன: ॥ (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ॥

വിഷ്ണു സഹസ്രനാമ സ്തോത്ര - ശ്ലോക 1

വി ശം വി ഷ്ണുർ - വ ഷ ട്കാ രോ (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ഭൂ ത ഭ വ്യ ഭ വ ത്വപുഃ | (Paadam 2)

ഭൂ ത കൃത് ഭൂ ത ഭൃദ് ഭാ വോ (Paadam 3)

ഭൂ താ താ ഭൂ ത ഭാ വ നഃ || (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ||

3.1.2 Lalita Sahasranamam

ललिता सहस्रनाम स्तोत्र - श्लोक ११८

आ त्म वि द्या म हा वि द्या (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

श्री वि द्या का म से वि ता | (Paadam 2)

श्री षो ड शा क्ष री वि द्या (Paadam 3)

त्रि खू टा का म को टि का || (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ||

லலிதா ஸஹஸ்ரநாம ஸ்தோத்ர - ஸ்லோக 118

ஆ த்ம வி த்₃யா ம ஹா வி த்₃யா (Paadam 1)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ஸ்ரீ வி த்₃யா கா ம ஸே வி தா | (Paadam 2)

ஸ்ரீ ஷோ ட₃ ஸா க்ஷ ரீ வி த்₃யா (Paadam 3)

த்ரி கூ₂ டா கா ம கோ டி கா || (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ||

பலிதா ஸஹஸ்ரநாம ஸ்தோத்ர - ஷ்லோக 118

ஞா னா வி ட்யா ம ஹா வி ட்யா (Paadam 1)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ஸ்ரீ வி ட்யா கா ம ஸே வி தா | (Paadam 2)

ஸ்ரீ ஷோ டா ஸா க்ஷ ரீ வி ட்யா (Paadam 3)

த்ரி வ்ய டா கா ம கோ டி கா || (Paadam 4)

After 32 letters, end of the Chandas is indicated by ||

3.1.3 Rudram

न॑ म॑ स्तौ॑ रु॒द्र॑ म॒न्य॑ व॒ (P1) उ॒ तो॑ त॒ इ॒ ष॑ वे॒ न॑ मः॑ । (P2)
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8
 न॑ म॑ स्तौ॑ अ॒स्तु॑ ध॒न्व॑ ने॒ (P3) बा॒ हु॒भ्या॑ सु॒ त॒ ते॒ न॑ मः॑ ॥ (P4)

न॑ ம॑ ஸ்தே॑ ரு த்₃ர॑ ம॒ ன்ய॑ வ॒ (P1)
 உ॒ தோ॑ த॒ இ ஷ॑ வே॒ ந॑ மः॑ । (P2)
 ந॑ ம॑ ஸ்தே॑ அ ஸ்து॒ த₄ ன்வ॑ னே॑ (P3)
 பா₃ஹு॑ ப்₄யா॑ மு॒ த தே॒ ந॑ மः॑ ॥ (P4)

न॑ म॑ स्तौ॑ रु॒द्र॑ म॒न्य॑ व॒ (P1)
 उ॒ तो॑ त॒ इ॒ ष॑ वे॒ न॑ मः॑ । (P2)
 न॑ म॑ स्तौ॑ अ॒स्तु॑ ध॒न्व॑ ने॒ (P3)
 बा॒ हु॒भ्या॑ सु॒ त॒ ते॒ न॑ मः॑ ॥ (P4)

Note: P1, P2, P3, P4 indicate the number of the Paadam.

3.1.4 Purusha Suktam

स॒ ह॒ स्र॑ शी॒ र्षा॑ प॒रु॒ षः॑ । (P1) स॒ ह॒ स्रा॒ क्षः॑ स॒ ह॒ स्र॑ पात् । (P2)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

स॒ भू॒ मि॑ वि॒ श्व॒ तो॑ वृ॒ त्वा । (P3) अ॒ त्य॒ ति॒ ष॒-द॒ शा॒ ङ्गु॒ लं । (P4)

स॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ र॒ षீ॒ र्षा॑ प॒ ङ्गु॒ षः॑ । (P1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

स॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ रा॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ ङ्ग॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ र॒ पा॒ त् । (P2)

स॒ ङ्गु॒ मि॑ मी॒ वि॒ श्व॒ तो॑ वृ॒ त्वा । (P3)

अ॒ त्य॒ ति॒ ष॒-द॒ शा॒ ङ्गु॒ लं॑ ॥ (P4)

स॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ शी॒ र्षा॑ प॒रु॒ षः॑ । (P1)

स॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ रा॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ ङ्ग॒ ङ्ग॒ स्॒ र॒ पा॒ त् । (P2)

स॒ ङ्गु॒ मि॑ मी॒ वि॒ श्व॒ तो॑ वृ॒ त्वा । (P3)

अ॒ त्य॒ ति॒ ष॒-द॒ शा॒ ङ्गु॒ लं॑ ॥ (P4)

3.1.5 Recital of Anushtup Chandas:

The Veda Gurus/Scholars recommend that the rule to recite the Anushtup Chandas is to evenly recite the four parts of the Chandas clearly with a pause between one Paadam and the following Paadam. It should not be long to create a break.

3.2 Observations

1. When we get into the Second Anuvaham of Rudram, starting with Namō HiranyabAgāVe, each of the lines do not form a specific Chandas; it seems the total recital of one Anuvaaham or a set of Anuvaaham completes the Chandas.
2. Similarly, in Purusha Suktam , the flow of the mantra starting with the para “VedAhamEdam Purusham mahAntam” changes in terms of the number of Aksharas per Padam.