

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

**Chandas**

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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-छन्दाम्सि ॥

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

**ப்ரணவந்யாஸ:**

ப்ரணவஸ்ய ருஷிர் ப்<sub>3</sub>ரஹ்மா, தே<sub>3</sub>வீ கா<sub>3</sub>யத்ரிச்ச<sub>2</sub>ந்த: ,  
பரமாத்மா தே<sub>3</sub>வதா ॥

பூ<sub>4</sub>ராதி<sub>3</sub> ஸப்த வ்யாஹ்ருதீனாம் - அத்ரி- ப்<sub>4</sub>ருகு-குத்ஸ-  
வஸிஷ்ட-கௌ<sub>3</sub>தம- காஸ்யப-அங்கிரஸ ருஷய: ॥

கா<sub>3</sub>யத்ரீ-உஷ்ணிக்-அனுஷ்டுப்-ப்<sub>3</sub>ருஹதீ- பங்க்தீ- த்ருஷ்டுப்-  
ஐகத்யஸ்ப்-சந்தாம்ஸி ॥

அக்னி-வாயு-அர்க்க-வாகீஸ- வருண- இந்திர- விஸ்வே  
தேவா- தேவதா ||

**ப്രளவந்யஸ:**

ப്രளவந்ய ஜ்ஷிர் ப்ரஹ்மா, தேவீ ஸாயத்ரிஹ: ,  
பரமாத்மா தேவதா ||

பூராதி ஸப்ர வ்யாஹுதீநாம் - அத்ரி- பூஹு-கூஸ-வஸிஷ்ட-  
ஸாதம- காஸ்யப-அஸ்கிரஸ ஜ்ஷய: ||

ஸாயத்ரி-ஹ்ஷிக்-அநுஷ்டுப்-ஸ்யஹதீ- பக்தீ- துஷ்டுப்-  
ஜஹத்யஸ-ஹ்நாஸி ||

அஸி-வாயு-அர்க்க-வாஸீஸ- வருண- ஹ்ந- விஸே  
தேவா- தேவதா ||

**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 brain & heart 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<sup>1</sup> वि तु-र्व<sup>॥</sup> रे ष्यं । (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

भ गौ॑ दे॒ वस्य॑ धी॒ म हि॑ । (Paadam 2)

धि॒ यो॒ यो॑ नः॑ प्र॒ चो॒ द या॑त् ॥ (Paadam 3)

ஓம் த த்<sub>2</sub>ஸ॑ வி॒ துர் வ ரே॑ ண்யம் | (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ப<sub>4</sub> ர்கோ<sub>3</sub> தே<sub>3</sub> வ ஸ்ய॑ தீ<sub>4</sub> ம ஹி॑ | (Paadam 2)

தி<sub>4</sub> யோ॒ யோ॑ னः॑ ப்ர சோ॒ த<sub>3</sub> யாத் ॥ (Paadam 3)

ஓம் த ம்<sub>3</sub> வி॒ துர் வ ரே॑ ண்யம் | (Paadam 1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

ஓ ரீ<sub>3</sub>ஸ்ய॑ ஓ வ ஸ்ய॑ யீ ம ஹி॑ | (Paadam 2)

யி யோ॒ யோ॑ னः॑ ப்ர சோ॒ த<sub>3</sub> யாத் ॥ (Paadam 3)

### 2.2.2 Examples of Gayatrees of Other Devata

त॑ तु॒ रु॑ षा॒ य वि॑ द्य॒ हे॑ - व॒ क्र॒ तु॒ ण्डा॑ य॒ धी॒ म हि॑ ।

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

त॑ न्नो॒ द॒ न्तिः॑ प्र॒ चो॒ द या॑त् ॥

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

யு த்<sub>3</sub>ப ரு॑ ஷா ய வி॒ த்<sub>3</sub>ம ஹே॑



1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
வ	க்ர	து	ண்டா <sub>3</sub>	ய	தீ <sub>4</sub>	ம	ஹி
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

तत्पुरुषाय विद्महे महादेवाय धीमहि । तन्नो रुद्रः प्रचोदयात् ॥

नारायणाय विद्महे वासुदेवाय धीमहि । तन्नो विष्णुः प्रचोदयात् ॥

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
த	ந்நோ	த <sub>3</sub>	ந்தி:	ப்ர	சோ	த <sub>3</sub>	யாத்

നാരായണായ വിദ്മഹേ വാസുദേവായ ധീമഹി ।  
 തന്നോ വിഷ്ണുഃ 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

व ज्र न खा य वि द्म हे ती क्षण-द७ ष्टा य धी म हि ।  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16  
 त न्नो ना र सि७ हः प्र चो द यात् ॥  
 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 ज्र॒ न॒ खा॒ य॒ वि॒ द्म॒ हे॒ ती॒ क्ष॒ण-॑द७ ष्टा॒ य॒ धी॒ म॒ हि॒ ।  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8  
 त॑ न्नो॒ ना॒ र॒ सि॑७ हः॒ प्र॒ चो॒ द॒ या॒त् ॥  
 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16  
 त॑ न्नो॒ ना॒ र॒ सि॑७ हः॒ प्र॒ चो॒ द॒ या॒त् ॥  
 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 ன வ ற ய வி ங் க ஹ  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

தீ க்ஷ்ண ங் க ஸ்ரீ ய யீ ம ஹி ।  
 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

த னோ நா ர ஸிஃ ஹ: ஸ்ரீ யோ ங் க யாத் ||  
 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 द्द्यु 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)

பா<sub>4</sub> ஸ்க ரா ய வி த்<sub>3</sub>ம ஹே  
 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

ம ஹ த்<sub>3</sub>த்<sub>3</sub>ய தி க ரா ய த்<sub>4</sub> ம ஹி ।  
 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

த ன்நோ ஆ தி<sub>3</sub> த்ய: ப்ர சோ த<sub>3</sub> யாத் ||  
 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	സ്ക	രാ	യ <sup>1</sup>	വി	ദ്വ	ഹേ <sup>1</sup>			
1	2	3	4	5	6	7			
മ	ഹ	ദ്യു	തി	ക	രാ	യ <sup>1</sup>	ധീ	മ	ഹി ।
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
ത	നോ <sup>1</sup>	ആ	ദി	ത്യഃ	പ്ര	ചോ	ദ	യാത് <sup>11</sup>	
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, Siddha 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)

பூ<sub>4</sub> த ப<sub>4</sub> வ்ய ப<sub>4</sub> வ த்ப்ர பு: | (Paadam 2)

பூ<sub>4</sub> த க்ருத் பூ<sub>4</sub> த ப்ருத்<sub>3</sub> பா<sub>4</sub> வோ (Paadam 3)

பூ<sub>4</sub> தா த்மா பூ<sub>4</sub> த பா<sub>4</sub> வ ன: || (Paadam 4)

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

വിഷ്ണു സഹസ്രനാമ സ്തോത്രം - ശ്ലോക 1

വി ശ്യാം 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 ത്താ 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 - ப்லோக 118

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

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

ஸ்ரீ ஷோ ட<sub>3</sub> ஸா க்ஷ ரீ வி த்யா (Paadam 3)

த்ரி கூ<sub>2</sub> டா கா ம கோ டி கா || (Paadam 4)

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

லலிதா ஸஹஸ்ரநாம ஸ்தோத்ர - ஷ்லோக 118

ஞா ன 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 ட<sub>3</sub> ஸா க்ஷ ரீ வி ட்யா (Paadam 3)

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

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





3.1.4 Purusha Suktam

स॒ ह॒ स्र॑ शी॒ र्षा॑ प॒रु॒ षः॑ । (P1) स॒ ह॒ स्रा॑ क्षः 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 ति॑ ष-॒ द्द॒ शा॒ ङ्गु॒ लं । (P4)

स॒ ஹ॒ ஸ்ர॑ ஸ்ரீ ர்ஷா॒ பு ரு॒ ஷ:॑ | (P1)

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

स॒ ஹ॒ ஸ்ரா॒ க்ஷ ஸ்ஸ॒ ஹ ஸ்ர॑ பாத் | (P2)

स॒ பூ॒ மி॑ம் வி॒ ஸ்வ॒ தோ॑ வ்ரு॒ த்வா॑ | (P3)

अ॒ த்ய॑ தி ஷ்ட-<sub>2</sub> த்<sub>3</sub>த<sub>3</sub> ஸா॒ ந்ரு॒ லம் || (P4)

स॒ ஹ॒ ஸ்ரீ॑ ஸ்ரீ ர்ஷா॒ வு ரு॒ ஷ:॑ | (P1)

स॒ ஹ॒ ஸ்ரா॒ க்ஷ:॑ ஸ॒ ஹ॒ ஸ்ரீ॑ பாத் | (P2)

स॒ டூ॒ மி॑ம் வி॒ ஸ்வ॒ தோ॑ வ்ரு॒ த்வா॑ | (P3)

अ॒ த்ய॑ தி ஷ்ட டு ஸா॒ ன்ரு॒ லம் || (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 from various Rishis combined together.
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.