

The Rhythmic Structure of *Melam*

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Abstract

Chenda is a versatile instrument and is used on various occasions, strictly Ritualistic to totally entertainment; both as a Leading instrument, a Rhythm keeper. Its usage in theatre is as the 'talking drum' that compliments with maddalam and with the body movements of the actors. This study analyses, *Melam* and its rhythmic structures, *Melam* is a type of concert presented at the temples in Chenda. This paper has formed from field notes and interviewing Chenda masters like Sadanam Vasudevan, Padmashree Mattanur Sankaran Kutty Marar and Padmashree Peruvnam Kuttan Marar.

Keywords: *Chenda, Melam, Rhythmic Structure, Kerala Drum*

Introduction

Music is always part and parcel of human existence. It could be observed that all human activities have music, tone and rhythm in it. India has the oldest recorded music tradition dating back to about 3000 years (Kuroor, 2014). Though existed before in varied forms, the classical music as we see today originated during the Vedic Period. It was known as 'Samagaana' with *Swarams*(notes) 'Udatham' and 'Anudatham'. Later another note, 'Swaritham' was added during the period of Rigveda (the first Veda). According to the author of Sangeeth Darpana, 'The words originated from Rigveda, Music from Samaveda, Abhinaya (acting) from Yajurveda and Rasa from Adharvaveda (Ramarathnam, 1969). The music with seven *Sudhaswaras* (definite, distinguishable notes), known as *Saamasapthakam* with 22 *Shrutis* (or *Dhwanis*) in each *Sthayi* was established by Sarngadeva and Bharata much later. *Natyasastram*, the treatise on music and dance by Sage Bharata is an offshoot of Vedas. The fact that many *Natyasastrams* existed even before Bharata's work shows the interest in dance and music in the past.

Contrasting views existed about the composition of Music. One logic is that since *Nruthyam* follows *Vadyam* and *Vadyam* obeys *Geetham*, or in other words, music is *Tauryathrikam*, composing of three elements, *Geetham*, *Vadyam* and *Nrutham* (Sarngadevan). Another view is that *Geetham* and *Vadyam* make the Music (Nambisan, 2000).

Musical instruments and their classification

Indian Musical Instruments, popularly known as *Vadyams* are classified either on the basis of their Make or their use. On the basis of their make, these are divided into two; *Swara vadyams* and *Thaala vadyams*. *Swara vadyams* are further divided into two; *Thatha Vaadyam* and

Sushira Vaadyam. Thaala Vadyam also has two subdivisions viz. Avanaddha Vaadyam and Ghana Vaadyam.

tatham chaivaavanadham cha
ghanam sushiramevacha
chathurvidham thu vijnyeya
maathodyam lakshnaanvithm

- (*Natyasashtra, Chapter 28 Jaathivikalpam, Translation by K.P.Narayana Pisharoti*)
 (Pisharody, 1985)

Four categories of *Vadyams* viz. Thatham, Avanaddham, Ghanam and Sushiram, are the ideal ones.

- Thatha Vaadyam, instruments in which strings are plucked to produce notes, eg. Veena.
- Sushira Vaadyam, in which air is forced through holes and variation of frequency is achieved by changing the resonating column of air like in Basuri, Flute.
- Avanaddha Vaadyam, instruments with tensed skin on drums that are beaten such as Chenda, Mrudangam, Maddalam, Thavil, Thabala, Thimala, Edakka, Mizhavu, Udukku, Thudi etc.

are of three types;

- a) *Ankyas*: Those to be kept in lap and played, e.g. Mrudangam
- b) *Aalingyas*: Those played while keeping as embraced, e.g. Chenda, Maddalam
- c) *Urdhwaka*: Those played facing upwards, e.g. Mizhavu

deevaanaam dundubheen drushtwa
chaakaaramurajaam sthatha
aalingyamoordhakam chaiva
thadhaivaakika meva cha

It is believed that *Vadyams* such as *Ankyas*, *Aalingyas* and *Urdhakas* were made in accordance with the divine Drums of Devas. (ref: *Natyasashtra, Chapter 33 Avanaddhavidhi, Slokam 9*) (Pisharody, 1985).

Natyasastra narrates the story about the invention of *Avanadhavadyams* as follows. Saint Swati was on his way to bring water. Hovering clouds suddenly started down pouring as he reached the Lake. Inspired by the melodious music by the falling raindrops on the Lotus leaves, Saint designed *Avanaddha Vadyams* in association with *Viswakarma*. (ref: *Natyasashtra, Chapter 33 Avanaddhavidhi, Slokam 3-8*) (Pisharody, 1985).

Vadyams are also classified into three categories based on their use of viz.

Gaana Vadyam, for solo or accompanying e.g. Veena, Flute, Violin

Thaala Vaadyam, two, hose played continuously along with the song, eg. Mrudangam, Maddalam

And those played to indicate the basic beats only, eg. Chengila, Elathalam Sruthi Vaadyam, intended to maintain the Sruthi (frequency span of singing), e.g. Thambura, Sruthi box.

Musical tradition of Kerala

Kerala music has a predominant dominance of percussion instruments (Menon, 1986). This fact is explicit in the case of *Kshetravadyams*, which are the musical influence in worship associated with Kshetras (Temples). These are percussion-dominated in the sense that the main instruments are drums and cymbals and the rhythmic structure is the main feature of the music. The musical framework in these Vadyams consists of very sophisticated and elaborate rhythmical structure or format. Even wind instruments like Kuzhal and Kombu have a less important role to play and are more or fewer followers of a rhythm instrument.

Tantrasamuchaya, the treatise on rituals, mentions the importance of drumming during the Mudras of rituals and during festivals of a temple. In Kerala, members of the Marar and Pooduval community are responsible to handle the musical instruments during ritualistic activity. Depending on the intention, Kshethravadyams are classified into two main groups, viz. *Anushtnavadyam* and *Aghoshavadyam*. Sandhyavela, Keli, Thayambaka, Kombu pattu, Kuzhal pattu, Melams, and Panchavadyam are performed mainly with the aim of entertaining the devotees during festivals and are performed outside or in the outer part of the Shrine.

Vadyams like Paani, Parishavadyam, Edakka kooru done inside the temple are more or less ritualistic in nature. The main difference in these genres is that there is less or no chance for improvisation in ritualistic music. It is performed in unison with certain Mudras during the Tantric Kriyas by the Tantris. Anushtana vadyam is probably the oldest and the latter could be an improvement of it.

Melam

Samajasamaayi Melikkunnathu Melam –the ones that unite in unity is called Melam (NP, 2012). There are many Melams played on Chenda. They are mainly categorised in terms of their basic structure, the Thalam followed, or the pattern or style of playing. Some of the common rules of Melam can be summarized as follows.

Common rules of Melam

1. The Chenda Melams of Kerala is a well-disciplined orchestra of five instruments viz. Chenda-Edamthana & Valanthala, Kombu, Kuzhal and Elathalam . Melams are percussion wonders; hundreds of artistes linked in unison through synchronized beats of sticks, cymbals and sounds of music from pipes; performing non-stop for hours.
2. The most popular Melams are Panchari and Pandi. The stamp of Panchari is melody while Pandi is marked by its elegance. Panchari is played by hand and stick in Trichur while in Malabar it is both sticks. In Trichur area, the Edanthala and Valanthala of Chenda are respectively known as Uruttuchenda and Veekkanchenda.
3. Panchari stands as a guide Model to others Melams like Chempa, Chempata, Adantha, Anchatantha, Dhruvam etc. Pandi stands alone with its own uniqueness in structure. Each Melam, including the rare ones like Navam, Kalpam, Shadkari, has a strict procedure of playing and the innovative expertise of the drummer has less place in it.
4. In the past, there were no Institutions that taught Melam. A student joins the team as an Elathalam player or one on the Valanthala and learns the art by listening. Today, Melam is taught at The Kshetrakalapeetam of Vaikkam under Travancore Devaswam Board and The Vadyavidyalam under Guruvayoor Temple.
5. One of the rules of Melam is that the number of Valanthala, Kuzhal, Kombu and Elathalam should be the same as that of Edamthala. Sometimes this rule is broken by adding more Valanthalas and Elathalams to add the echoing punch of the Melam.

6. A big Melam must have a minimum of 15 number of each of these instruments. A number of Valanthalas and Elathalams may be doubled. The team might have 110 to 130 members.
7. Each member of the orchestra has a fixed position. 15 Edanthala Chenda is positioned in a line facing the array of 15 Kuzhals. Behind Kuzhal, Kombu stands in a parallel line. Just behind the Edanthala Chenda line, the Valamthalas and Elathalams positions alternatively. In each instrument group, the Senior most occupies the central post and others stand in his line in descending order of seniority on both sides.
8. An outsider cannot easily identify the conductor of the orchestra. The *Pramaanakkar* – Senior most of Chenda and Kuzhal, who are just facing each other, with codes and symbols like bending and rounding Kuzhal or nodding gestures, directs the Melam. Decisions on duration, times of Kalaasam, time allotment for each phase of drumming are instantly conveyed by the movement of the head to players on both sides by the Senior and is being transmitted to all members. After each Kalaasam, the Kombu assumes charge, followed by Kuzhal.
9. Each Melam has a *Kaalamital* –a process of fixing the basic tempo, in the beginning. Right on the ending beat of introductory Valanthala drumming, a *ddim* is superimposed by the Edanthala with *Ottakkol* which is followed by beats in centre and rims for one full *Thaalavatta*. Then the Melam follows.
10. Exempting Paandi, there are three phases for all Melams. The first one is the *Nerkolghattam*, *thakithaka tharakana*. The second is *Thakkittaghattam*, *ddim ddim tharikita thakathari kitathaka*. The third is the *Kuzhamarikkal*. Each *Kuzhamarikkal* has 32 beats; each Chempata has one *thakkitta*, one *Nerlol*, and on *Kai*. Each Kalasam of *Onnaam kaalam* comprise of two *Thaalavattams*. From *Randaamkaalam* onwards there is only *Therukalaasam* during 2 *Thaalavattams*. The last *Kaalam* has only one *Thaalavattam*. After this, the Melam ends with the *Theerukalaasam*. This is the common feature of all Panchari-based Melams. An interesting aspect is that in Melam only *thakkitta* and *Nerkolu* is played and the basic lesson *tharikita* is never played anywhere in any Melam!
11. Also, *Urulukol*, which is common in other Kaalams is never played in the *Onnaam kaalam*.
12. Except for Paandi, all other Melams can be generally called '*Chempatamelangal*', as those are based on parts or subdivisions of Chenpata. Hence the individuality of a Melam becomes evident only towards the end only.



Picture 1 : Melam performed by Padmashree Peruvanam Kuttan Marar , **Click** : Niraj Vishnu Nambiar

Panchari

Details on *Mathras* and *Aksharakaalam*s of Melams

Panchari- Known as Panchakarika in old texts. It is the process of doing 5 times and not doing once or 5 *thuranna ati*-open beats and one *Veesu* –non beat. In a similar Melam, the Shadkaari, there are 7 *Maathras*; 6 beats and one *Veesu*. Each *Mathra* is made as multiples of 8-beat *Chempata*. There is an additional *Pathinja Kaalam* in case of Panchari.

<i>Kaalam 1</i>	-	96 <i>Aksharas</i>
<i>Kaalam 2</i>	-	48 <i>Aksharas</i>
<i>Kaalam 3</i>	-	24 <i>Aksharasv</i>
<i>Kaalam 4</i>	-	12 <i>Aksharas</i>
<i>Kaalam 5</i>	-	6 <i>Aksharas</i>

Hence there are 6 *Kaalams* –tempos of playing. In some places, a *Murippanchaari*, comprising of only 3 *Aksharas* is played.



Picture 2: Melam performance at Shri Koodalmanikya Temple, Click: Niraj Vishnu Nambiar

Rhythmic Structure of Panchari

Panchari *Onnamkaalam* – The First Tempo

The *Thaalaghatana*- rhythmic structure of first *Kaalam* has $12 \times 8 = 96$ *Aksharas*. After the *Kaalamital* with one hand, one *Chempata* is played each time. The *Thaalam* is being maintained on the *Valanthala*, the *Vaythaari*- vocal equivalent is given below:

- 1) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi* (*pothippitikkunnu*- controlled beating)
- 2) *dhi-dhi-dhi X dhi-dhi-dhi X*
- 3) *dhi-dhi-dhi X dhi-dhi-dhi X*
- 4) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim* (*thurannu* –open beats)
- 5) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-*
- 6) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim*

- 7) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-*
- 8) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim*
- 9) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi-*
- 10) *dhi-dhi-dhi-dhi dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim*
- 11) *dhim X X -dhim X X -dhim X X -dhim X X*
- 12) *dhim X -dhim X -dhim-dhim-dhim-dhim*

Here items 5 & 6, 7 & 8, 9 & 10 are pairs and 11 & 12 are occasions for *Kalaasam*. This combination becomes the first *Kaalam* of Chempa Melam if the third pair 9 & 10 are removed. Again if the second pair 7 & 8 are removed, it is the Chempata first *Kaalam* (8 Chempata = $8 \times 8 = 64$). This is the only difference in the first *Kaalam* of Melams, hence they resemble very much in this phase.

The *thuranna ati* – open beat on Valanthala is not performed from the *thakkitta* of the second phase. This is the only difference. During the *Kuzhamarichchil*, the tempo increases a bit. All *Kalaasams* are always the last two *Thaalavattam*. The ending *Theerukalaasam* of *Onnaam Kaalam* has two *Thaalavattam* duration.

Panchari Randaam Kaalam – The Second Tempo

This is of two types. Let us examine the second one first. The *Thaalaghatana*- rhythmic structure of Second *Kaalam* has $6 \times 8 = 48$ Aksharas.

- 1) *dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi X* (X – one Veeu or 1 unit time gap)
- 2) *dhi X dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim*
- 3) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim*
- 4) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim*
- 5) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X X*
- 6) *dhim X X dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim*

From this *Kaalam* onwards, there is only *Thakkitta* and *Kuzhamarikkal*. The second one is the process of playing the stick in small fine movements with the right hand. From this *Kaalam* onwards, the *Thakkitta* is played in *Urulukol* and perform the *Kalaasam* in the last *Thaalavattam*. The ending *Thirukalaasam* of this *Kaalam* consists of 2 *Thaalavattams* (of 5,6).

Panchari Moonnam Kaalam – The Third Tempo

Each *Thaalaghatana* of third *Kaalam* has 3 Chempatas i.e. $3 \times 8 = 24$ Aksharas. The *Valanthala vaithaari* is as follows;

- 1) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim dhim* (X – one Veeu or 1 unit time gap)
- 2) *dhim dhim dhim X dhim dhim dhim*
- 3) *dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim*

Here also there is *Urululol* in the end at *Thakkitta* time. Then two *Chempatavattams*, *Kalaasam at the beginning of the third*, then an ordinary *Kalaasam* at the third Chempata, 2 *Thaalavattam* for the main *Kalaasam*, at the end of first *Thaalavattam*, and enter into the next *Kaalam*.

Panchari Naalaam Kaalam – The Fourth Tempo

Each *Thaalaghatana* of Fourth *Kaalam* has $1\frac{1}{2}$ Chempatas i.e. $4+4+4 = 12$ Aksharas. The *Valanthala vaithaari* is as follows:

4 4 4
dhim dhim dhim I dhim dhim I dhim dhim dhim I

This has *Urulukol* in the beginning. After the *Kuzhamarikkal*, the beats are as 8+4. In the end, the *valiyakalaasam* in the first 8 beats after ending. Hence 4 beats from first and 8 from the next makes 16 *Aksharas*.

Panchari Anchaam Kaalam – The Fifth Tempo

Each *Thaalaghatana* of Fifth *Kaalam* has $\frac{3}{4}$ *Chempatas* i.e. 4+2 = 6 *Aksharas*. The *Valanthala vaithaari* is as follows;

dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X (5 open beats and one *Veesu*)

The originality of this Melam is evidently depicted in this *Kaalam*. There is *Urulukol* too. The *Kalaasam* starts at the end of *Thaala*, performs one full *Thaalavattam*, and is taken at the 4th *Akshara* of the next one. There is only *Thakkitta* here for *Kuzhamarikkal*. There is no *Valiyakalaasam* here. Each Melam ends with a *Theerukalaasam* in *Chempata* 4 beats. Hence the last *Kalaasams* have no *Valiyakalaasam*.

A Northern Version

There is another way of performing this Panchari Melam. Formerly, the *valiya* Panchari with 96 *Aksharas* was not popular in regions north to Trichur (Dineshan, 2010). Here the *Randaam Kaalam* used to be played as the First, with differences in keeping the beats. Often a 3-bit *Murippanchaari* is added and the Melam ends with a *Theerukalaasam* after this fifth *Kaalam*.

The *RandaamKaalam* has 6 *Chempatas* i.e. 6 X 8 = 48 *Aksharas*. The *Valanthala vaithaari* is as follows:

- | | | |
|-------|--|-----|
| (i) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i> | - 8 |
| | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 | |
| (ii) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim</i> | - 8 |
| (iii) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i> | - 8 |
| (iv) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim</i> | - 8 |
| (v) | <i>X X dhim X X dhim X X dhim X X</i> | - 8 |
| (vi) | <i>dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim</i> | - 8 |

This is executed in 3 stages of *Ottakkol*, *Thakkitta*, *Kuzhamarikkal* with proper tempo. The last two *Thaalavattams*, 5th and 6th is used for *Kalaasams*. Often there is an item called *Vakakottuka*. This is more or less a free process of playing and filling with *Emmams* in *thaalavattams* of the *Third Kaalam*. This is probably due to the fact that innovative playing has no place elsewhere in any Melam. Here also the hierarchy is followed, and the ending is done by the seniormost. It then enters the *Murippanchari*, which is ended at the completion of *Pradakshinam* with a *Theerukalaasam*. Though has a 3 *Aksharakaalam*, this is not *Rupakam*, as its *Samam* is the second beat.

Chempa Melam

Onnaam Kaalam Chempa

(The First tempo) - 80 *Aksharas* - beats. 10 *Chempata* (10 X 8 = 80)

As described in the annexure of Panchaari *Onnaam kaalam*, if two *Chempata Vattams* are uncounted, the *Thaalam* settles to 10 *Chempatas* i.e 10 X 8 = 80 (Menon, 1986). All other conditions remain the same and need no repetition.

Randaam Kaalsm Chempa

(The Second tempo) - 40 Aksharas - beats. 5 Chempata (5 X 8 = 40)

- (i) *dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi* - 8
(ii) *dhi X dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim* - 8
(iii) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim* - 8
(iv) *dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim* - 8
(v) *dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim* - 8

Total = 80

The executing details are not mentioned as it is the same way as that of the Panchari, and is applicable to all Melams.

Moonnaam Kaalsm Chempa(The Third tempo) - 20 Aksharas - beats. 2¹/₂ Chempata (8+4+8 = 20)

- (i) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim* - 8
(ii) *dhim dhim dhim X* - 4
(iii) *dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim* - 8

Total = 20

Naalaam Kaalsm Chempa(The Fourth tempo) - 10 Aksharas - beats. 1¹/₄ Chempata (8+2 = 10)

- (i) *dhi dhi dhi dhim X* -
1 2 3 4 5
(ii) *dhim dhim X* -
6 7 8
(iii) *dhim X* -
9 10

Total = 20

Atantha Melam**Onnaam Kaalam Atantha**

(The First tempo) - 56 Aksharas - beats. (20+20+8+8 = 56)

- (i) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim X dhi dhi dhim X dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X*
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8-1 2 3 4-1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8+4+8=20
(ii) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim X dhi dhi dhim X dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X*
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8-1 2 3 4-1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 8+4+8=20
(iii) *X dhim X X dhim X X dhim X X*

	=8
(iv) <i>dhim X dhim X dhimdhimdhimdhimdhim X</i>	
Total	= 56

Randaam Kaalam Atantha

(The Second tempo) - 28 Aksharas - beats. (10+10+8 = 28)

(i) *dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhim dhim dhim X*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	(Ramarathnam, 1969)
=10	

(ii) *dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhim dhim dhim X*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10	=10
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(iii) *dhim X dhimdhimdhimdhimdhim X*

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	=8
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Total =28

Moonnaam Kaalam Atantha

(The Third tempo) - 14 Aksharas - beats. (5+5+4 = 14)

(i) *dhi dhi dhi dhim X*

1 2 3 4 5	=5
-----------	----

(ii) *dhi dhi dhi dhim X*

1 2 3 4 5	=5
-----------	----

(iii) *dhimX dhim X*

1 2 3 4	=4
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Naalaam Kaalam Atantha

(The Third tempo) - 14/7 Aksharas - beats. (14)

dhimdhimdhimdhim X dhimdhimdhimdhim X dhim X dhim X =14

Before the *Kuzhamarikkal*, all the 14 Aksharas are stricken as open beats (*Thurannupitikkuka*) and after *Kuzhamarikkal*, it is considered as 7 Aksharas.

dhimdhim X X dhimdhimdhimdhim X X, though appears as 7, in its micro-scale it is 14 Aksharas.

Anchadantha Melam

The *vaithaari* – rhythmic equivalent vocal recital- of a 14-beat Adantha is *dhim x dhim x* which is 4 beats played twice in succession. Here instead 5 beats are played in the last *Kaalam*. Thus the Melam with 5 beats – *Anchati* – assumed the name *Anchadantha* in the common parlance. Actually, it is the *Natabheda* –variety of playing within a fixed interval- *thakkitta thakkitta thaka*. This is scientifically known as *Rambhanata* (Vijayakrishnan, Layavinnyasam, 2018). This

fact is however not well known. It can be boldly stated that the *Thaalam*, *Anchathanthais* the same as *chempata* with the difference in the method of execution – *Prayogavethyaasam*.

Onnaam Kaalam Anchadhantha

(First Tempo), 8 – Chempata, $8 \times 8 = 64$ Aksharas– beats.

(i)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i>	- 8
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
(ii)	<i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi dhi dhi X</i>	- 8
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
(iii)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
(iv)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i>	- 8
(v)	<i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi dhi dhi X</i>	- 8
(vi)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
(vii)	<i>dhim X dhim X dhim X</i>	- 8
(viii)	<i>dhi X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
	Total = 64	

Ramdaam Kaalam Anchadhantha

(Second Tempo), 4 – Chempata, $4 \times 8 = 32$ Aksharas– beats.

(i)	<i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi X dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 12
(ii)	<i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 12
(iii)	<i>dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim</i>	- 8
	Total = 32	

Moonnaam Kaalam Anchadhantha

(Third Tempo), 2 – Chempata, $2 \times 8 = 16$ Aksharas– beats.

(i)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim X dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X dhim X dhim X</i>	- 16
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16	

Naaalaam Kaalam Anchadhantha

(Fourth Tempo), 1 – Chempata, $1 \times 8 = 8$ Aksharas– beats.

dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X
dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X
dhim X dhim X

In this Melam also, as stated elsewhere, in the 16th beat is played open until the fist is twisted up- *Kuzhamarikkumvare*; and after the *Kuzhamarikkal*; the 8 beats are played thus -

dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim X

Dhruvam Melam

7 – Chempata = $7 \times 8 = 56$ Aksharakaalam– beats. This basis of this 14-beat Melam is the same as that of *Chathurashrajaathi Dhruvam* of Carnatic Music. It is reasonable to assume that the

name *Dhruvam* might have been given by an exponent of Carnatic Music as this Melam is based on Atantha with 14 beats (Warrier, 1992). It is noteworthy that the word *Dhruvam* is aligned to any subject in connection with Melam ! One of the peculiarities of this Melam is the fact that it is played only in three *Kaalams* -tempos-, unlike others.

Onnaam Kaalam Dhruvam Melam

(First Tempo), 7 – Chempata, $7 \times 8 = 56$ Aksharas– beats.

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| (i) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i> | - 8 |
| (ii) | <i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi dhi dhi X</i> | - 8 |
| (iii) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i> | - 8 |
| (iv) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X</i> | - 8 |
| (v) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i> | - 8 |
| (vi) | <i>X dhim X X dhim XX dhim X X</i> | - 8 |
| (vii) | <i>dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X</i> | <u>- 8</u> |

Total = 56

Randaam Kaalam Dhruvam Melam

(Second Tempo), $3\frac{1}{2}$ – Chempata, $3 \times 8 + 1 \times 4 = 28$ Aksharas– beats.

- | | | |
|-------|---|------------|
| (i) | <i>dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i> | - 12 |
| (ii) | <i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i> | - 8 |
| (iii) | <i>dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X</i> | <u>- 8</u> |

Total = 28

Moonnaam Kaalam Dhruvam Melam

(Third Tempo), $1\frac{3}{4}$ – Chempata, $6 + 8 = 14$ Aksharas– beats.

dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X - 14

The *Theerukalaasam* is performed after the three *Kaalams* of the *Dhruva Melam*.

Chempata Melam

It is 8 – Chempata, $8 \times 8 = 64$ Aksharas . The *Onnaamkaalam* of this Melam is dealt with while discussing *Panchaari Onnaamkaalam*. Since other aspects bear a close resemblance, it suffices to state that; *Randaam Kaalam* has 32 Aksharas, *Moonnaam Kaalam* has 16 and the *Naalaam Kaalam* has 8 Aksharas. This is the 8-beat (*mathra*) Chempata. However, let us examine the *Naalaam Kaalam* alone.

dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim X dhim X - 8

Chempata Melam, which has no link to the one discussed earlier. This particular one has only two *Kaalams*. This is common in the *Poojakkottu* and at the beginning of *Paandi Melam* (Vijayakrishnan, Mattanoor Sankarankutty Marar: A Biography , 2000). This has two *Kaalams*; one with 16 – Aksharas and another with 8.

Onnaam Kaalam Chempata Melam

(First Tempo), 16 Aksharas– beats.

dhi dhi dhi X dhi X dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X - 16

Randaam Kaalam Chempata Melam

(Second Tempo).

In the first phase,

dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X - 12

and then in the Second phase two *Thaalavattams* of

dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim X - 12

is being played, and then, in addition to two sequences of the first. The *Thirukalaasam* is performed by playing the Second phase alone.

Paandi Melam

Most of the Melams are Chempata-based and bears a relationship with Panchaari. However, Paandi Melam differs from this pattern and is unique and elegant in its style (Achuthankutty, 2013). It bears no relationship with the then Paandi Naatu (Tamil Nadu or another land). The elite community of the time seems to be reluctant to accept a non-traditional Melam and so they gave a sarcastic comment ‘paandi’ –meaning that something that is not of this land. Even today, except on rare occasions, Paandi is not played within the four walls of the temple. During the *Pallivetta* of any temple festival, the Paandi is the accompanying Melam when the procession reaches outside the walls for *darshan* of the mass. Paandi reverberates to the brim even in open fields and is the most thrilling experience. Hence this has already earned the most commonly appreciated Melam (Vijayakrishnan, Layavinnyasam, 2018). The instruments Edanthala, Valanthala, Kombu, Kuzhal, Elathaalam- and their respective positioning is similar to that of any Melam.

Shadkaari Melam

The basic structure is designed in a similar way as the 2,3,4 & 5 *Kaalams* of Panchari. The last *Kaalam* of 7 Aksharas is like the 5th *Kaalam* of Panchari, though has an extra *Aksharam*. All other details, including that of Thirukkalaasam is like other Melams (Vijayakrishnan, Thayambakayudae Rasathandram, 2006).

The *Kaalams* respectively contain 56, 28, 14, & 7 Aksharas, as detailed below.

Onnaam Kaalam Shadkaari

(First Tempo), 7 – Chempata, 7X 8 = 56 Aksharas– beats.

(i) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X* - 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

(ii) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X* - 8

(iii) *dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi dhi X* - 8

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

(iv)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
(v)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
(vi)	<i>X dhim XX dhim XX dhim X X</i>	- 8
(vii)	<i>dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
	Total	=56

Randaam Kaalam Shadkaari

(Second Tempo), $3\frac{1}{2}$ – Chempata, $3 \times 8 + 4 = 28$ Aksharas – beats.

(i)	<i>dhi dhi dhi dhi dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
	1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	
(ii)	<i>dhim dhim dhim X dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 8
(iii)	<i>dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 4
	1 2 3 4	
(iv)	<i>dhim X dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim <u>dhim</u></i>	- 8
	Total	=28

Moonnaam Kaalam Shadkaari(Third Tempo), $1\frac{3}{4}$ – Chempata, 14 Aksharas – beats.

<i>dhi dhi dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim X dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 14
1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8	

Naalaam Kaalam.Shadkaari

(Fourth Tempo), 7 Aksharas– beats.

<i>dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim dhim X</i>	- 7
1 2 3 4 5 6 7	

Other Melams Like Navam, Kalpam also do Exist, though Played Rarely. Today, Almost all the chenda players are experts in ,melam too. Some of the artists are Peruvanam Kuttan Marar, Padmashree Mattanur Sankaran Kutty Marar, Kadannapally Sankaran Kutty Marar and Ullyeri Sankara Marar.

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