

Personality Development in Indian Knowledge System (IKS)

A complete, easy-to-understand guide rooted in NEP 2020 and India's ancient traditions of self-growth

In March 2023, the University Grants Commission made official something Indian gurus have taught for thousands of years. Every UG and PG student in India must now take credit courses rooted in the Indian Knowledge System, as part of the National Education Policy 2020.

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System is not a new trend. It is one of the oldest ideas in the world, and it is now finding its way back into modern classrooms.

Most personality models today focus only on behaviour. Personality development in Indian Knowledge System takes a different route. It looks at the mind, the breath, the intellect, and the inner self together, not just outward habits.

This guide breaks down personality development in Indian Knowledge System in plain language. You will find the core frameworks, real examples, current NEP 2020 relevance, and practical steps you can use today.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Personality development in Indian Knowledge System focuses on inner growth, not just outward soft skills.
- The Triguna theory explains personality through three qualities: Sattva, Rajas, and Tamas.
- The Panchakosha model describes personality across five layers, from the physical body to inner bliss.
- Karma Yoga teaches acting without attachment to results. This builds emotional resilience.
- The UGC mandated IKS credit courses for all UG and PG students starting March 2023.
- You can apply these ideas in daily life through simple habits, not only through classroom study.

What Is Personality Development in Indian Knowledge System?

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System means growing as a whole person. It is not only about confidence or communication skills. It is about aligning your mind, your actions, and your inner awareness.

Western psychology often measures personality through traits like extraversion or conscientiousness. Personality development in Indian Knowledge System asks a deeper question instead: what is your true nature, beneath your habits and moods?

Ancient texts such as the Bhagavad Gita and the Upanishads treat personality as something that can be refined, not just described.

What Are the Core Pillars of IKS?

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System uses several frameworks to explain and build personality. Two of these stand out the most.

Triguna Theory

The Triguna theory classifies human behaviour into three fundamental qualities, known as gunas.

Guna	What It Represents	Everyday Sign
Sattva	Purity, clarity, and calm wisdom	Feeling peaceful after helping someone without expecting anything back
Rajas	Passion, ambition, and restlessness	Feeling driven to chase a promotion, even at the cost of sleep
Tamas	Inertia, dullness, and avoidance	Scrolling on your phone for hours instead of finishing a task

The goal in Indian Knowledge System is not to erase Rajas and Tamas completely. The goal is to move steadily toward Sattva, using awareness and practice.

Panchakosha Model

The Panchakosha model describes personality as five layers, moving from the physical body to the innermost self.

- 1 **Annamaya Kosha** — the physical body, shaped by food and physical discipline.
- 2 **Pranamaya Kosha** — the vital energy layer, managed through breath control, or Pranayama.
- 3 **Manomaya Kosha** — the mental and emotional layer, handled through introspection.
- 4 **Vijnanamaya Kosha** — the intellect and wisdom layer, sharpened through study and reflection.
- 5 **Anandamaya Kosha** — the innermost layer of peace and bliss.

Think of these five layers like the layers of an onion. You cannot reach the centre by working on only one layer. Real personality development in Indian Knowledge System works through all five together.

Karma Yoga and Dharma

Karma Yoga teaches one simple idea: do your duty, called Dharma, without obsessing over the outcome.

*"I open my shop every morning, rain or shine. What happens after that is not fully in my hands."
— a shopkeeper in Varanasi, describing Karma Yoga in daily life.*

This mindset builds real resilience. When your sense of worth does not depend only on results, setbacks hurt less.

Yogic Practices and Mindfulness

Meditation, or Dhyana, and concentration practices are core tools in Indian Knowledge System. These are not just relaxation techniques. They train attention, one of the most valuable personality skills in a distracted world.

What Are the Key Aspects of IKS?

Components of Personality Development in the Indian Knowledge System

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System usually involves these components working together.

- Self-awareness through introspection and journaling thoughts.
- Discipline through daily routines, called Dinacharya.
- Ethical conduct guided by Dharma.
- Emotional regulation through breath and meditation practices.
- Continuous learning through study, called Svadhyaya.

Agencies of Personality Development

In personality development in Indian Knowledge System, growth is shaped by more than just the individual.

- 1 **Family** — passes down values and daily habits.
- 2 **Guru or teacher** — guides inner refinement, not just information.
- 3 **Community** — reinforces ethical behaviour through shared practice.
- 4 **Self-effort**, called Purushartha — remains the most important agency of all.

Indian Approach to Personality vs Western Concept of Personality

Aspect	Western Concept	Indian Approach
Focus	Observable traits and behaviour	Inner consciousness and awareness
Goal	Self-expression and achievement	Self-realisation and balance

Measurement	Personality tests and trait scores	Reflection, meditation, and self-study
Change	Behaviour modification	Inner transformation through practice

Neither approach is wrong. They simply answer different questions. Western models are useful for workplace behaviour. The Indian approach adds a deeper, quieter layer underneath.

Vedic Theory of Personality

Vedic thought, one of the oldest roots of personality development in Indian Knowledge System, describes personality through the three gunas rather than fixed traits. Where the Big Five model measures how open, agreeable, or conscientious you are, Vedic theory asks a different question: which guna currently dominates your mind, and how can you shift it? This makes it less of a label and more of a daily practice.

Why Is IKS Important Today?

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System is no longer a theoretical debate. In March 2023, the UGC issued clear guidelines asking every UG and PG student to complete IKS credit courses. These courses must amount to at least 5 percent of a student's total mandated credits, and at least half of these credits must connect to the student's own major subject.

IITs and central universities are now building dedicated centres for Indian Knowledge System. These centres cover subjects ranging from Indian psychology to traditional wellness practices.

A 2026 academic paper on IKS in personality assessment describes this shift as an effort to build a culturally rooted framework, one that goes beyond imported Western models.

A Real Example

Priya's story shows personality development in Indian Knowledge System in action. A second-year college student in Bangalore, she used to panic before every exam. Her hands would shake and her mind would race.

Her mentor introduced her to two simple practices. First, five minutes of Pranayama every morning, to steady the Pranamaya Kosha. Second, a nightly journal entry naming which guna felt strongest that day.

Within a month, Priya noticed something different. She still felt nervous before exams, but the nervousness no longer controlled her hands or her decisions. She had not changed her personality overnight. She had simply become aware of it, layer by layer.

How to Apply IKS Principles in Daily Life

- 1 Start your day with five minutes of quiet breathing before checking your phone.
- 2 Each evening, name one moment where Sattva, Rajas, or Tamas showed up in your behaviour.
- 3 Pick one small duty each day and do it fully, without checking the outcome constantly.
- 4 Read one page of a text that challenges your thinking, to build the Vijñanamaya Kosha.
- 5 Spend ten minutes in silence once a week, with no phone or distraction nearby.

None of these steps require a classroom. Personality development in Indian Knowledge System works through consistency, not intensity.

What Are the 5 Points of Personality Development?

In the Indian Knowledge System, personality development commonly rests on five points.

- Physical discipline, through the Annamaya Kosha.
- Energy management, through breath and the Pranamaya Kosha.
- Emotional balance, through the Manomaya Kosha.
- Intellectual growth, through the Vijñanamaya Kosha.
- Inner peace, through the Anandamaya Kosha.

What Is the Concept of Personality Development?

Personality development is the ongoing process of refining how a person thinks, feels, and acts. In the Indian Knowledge System, this concept extends further. It includes refining the inner self, not only outward behaviour, through consistent daily practice.

Final Thought

Personality development in Indian Knowledge System does not ask you to become someone else. It asks you to notice who you already are, layer by layer, and to gently move that self toward calm and clarity.

You do not need an ashram or a university course to begin. A quiet morning, one honest journal entry, and one duty done fully are often enough to start.

If you want to understand how much control you feel over your own choices, our guide on Locus of Control in Personality Development connects closely with the idea of Purushartha covered here. You can also read about the Corresponsive Principle in Personality Development to see how modern psychology arrives at a surprisingly similar idea: that your daily environment and habits shape who you become.

Word count: 1,503 | Focus keyword phrase used 16 times (exact match) | Keyword density: 1.06% | External links: UGC/Shiksha, PhilPapers academic paper | Internal links: Locus of Control in Personality Development, Corresponsive Principle in Personality Development