New York, January 02: Smartphones, often billed as distractors, can actually help enhance attention and mindfulness, claims an Indian-American researcher.

Jasprit Singh, professor of electrical engineering and computer science at University of Michigan, has suggested that smartphones can enhance mindfulness, help users stay attentive and achieve particular goals while at work or home.

"In our culture today, we often don’t have scarcity of food or gadgets or knowledge. The scarcity has shifted to mindfulness," said Singh in a release issued by University of Michigan.

"Humans tend to forget, especially under stress. But smartphones don’t operate that way," he added.

During one of his classes, Singh challenged his students to design mobile apps to help users set and meet ‘wellness’ milestones.
The apps his team developed focused on delivering messages to users at a set time or place.

An app named ‘Balance’, developed for senior citizens, offers easy and routine access to short exercise videos that could improve coordination and prevent falls.

‘WeeAddition’ app guides women through pregnancy while ‘Joggle’ is a collaborative art, poetry and music app that could encourage creativity.

Another app named ‘College Granny’ is aimed to help students balance studying, socialising and develop healthy habits. The users can set the app to remind them at appropriate times to, say, go to sleep, take break from reading, or quit after a particular number of drinks at a bar, said the release.

“The goal of this course was to bring harmony between what we know and what we do,” Singh added. (IANS)