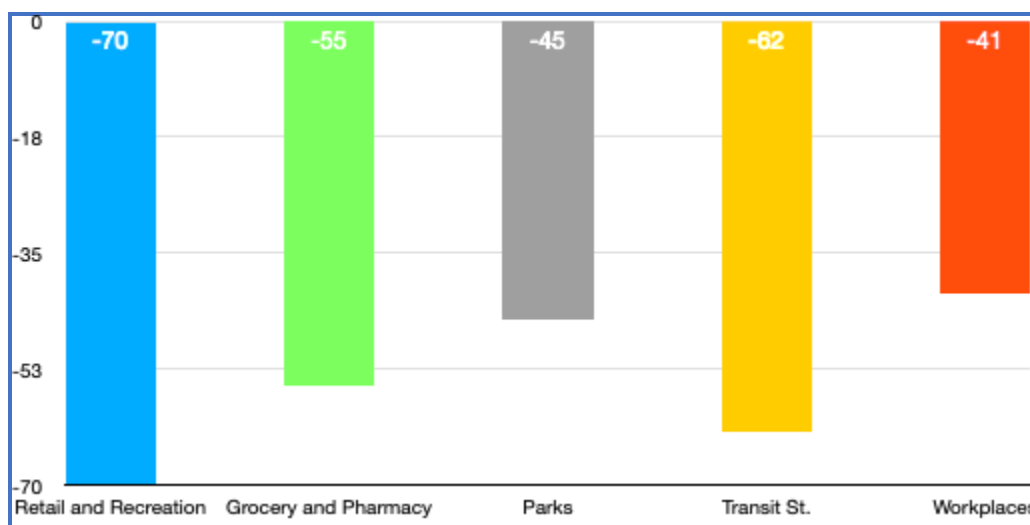# The Mobility Estimates and Social Outlook

The country is in a lockdown, the economic activity has plunged, and it is advised to stay at home in these testing times of COVID-19. Despite the clear government orders, commanding instructions and awareness campaigns, people are less heeded to comply with these. Away from the metropolitan hustle, there is a life less interrupted and is less affected by the state orders; and does go-on synonymous to as it was before, with less economic transactions assuredly.

However, the trickle-down, and indiscriminate, effects of economic slowdown are tiptoeing in for all factions; and there is a visible slowdown in community mobility in Pakistan. While the media reports indicate less affective social-distancing abiding within peripheral areas, there is clear indication of low mobility seen in urban areas and public spaces. Google mobility reports suggests a precipitous slowdown in mobility with the help of tailing mechanisms of geo-locating the people. Also, the indecisiveness of government in implementing full or partial lockdown has made the lockdown avoidable, thus allowing partial mobility within cities and towns.

Google started reporting the mobility changes on the baseline median of the 5-week spanning since January 3, 2020 to February 6, 2020.[i] As per the data, till March 29, 2020 there is a significant decrease observable in the mobility within Pakistan. However, several incidents of carelessness and religious congregations keep the country at the danger of further thousands of Corona cases.

Google has been using the location data in understanding how social distancing, or quarantine, has affected the movements of people; and in order to map the changes in patterns, Google is updating its reports.

Figure 1: Mobility Change in Pakistan (%)

Governments worldwide are partnering with the Google, and using cumulative data, to keep people at their homes, and in case of unusual gatherings and the rush, the local administration is alerted to disperse the people.
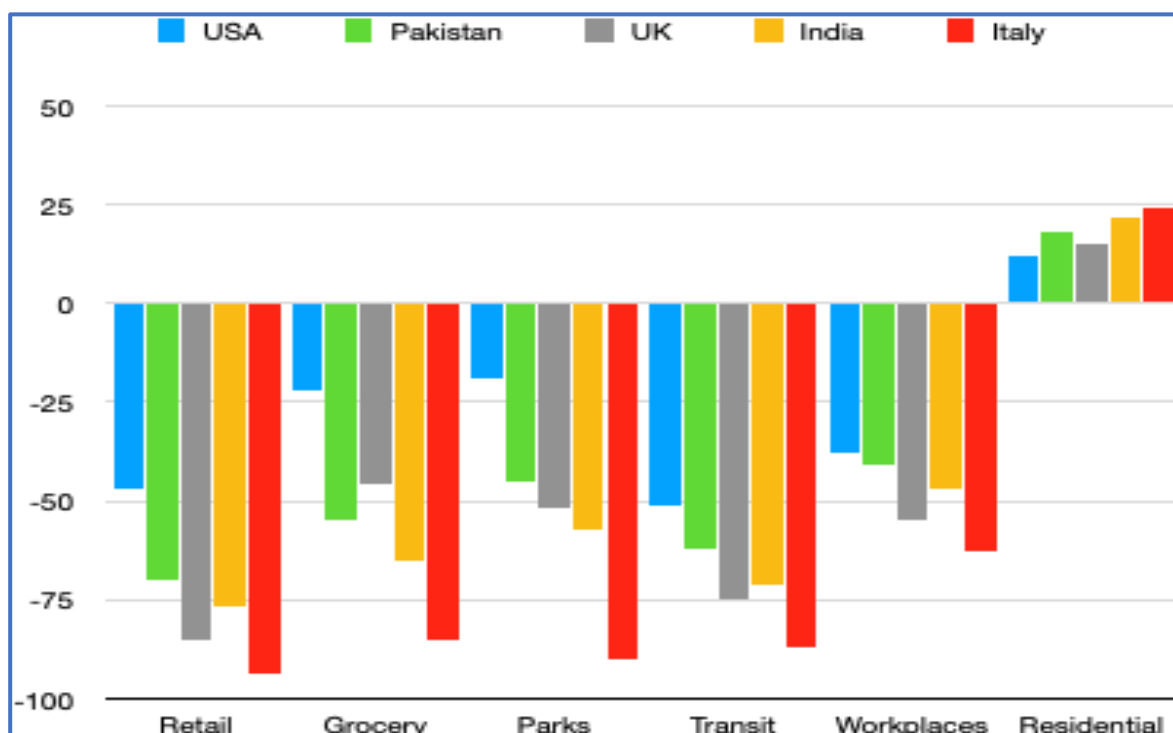
In Pakistan the statistics show a decrease of 47 % in Retail and Recreation Mobility as compared to baseline 5-week period of January to February 2020. Less people are visiting the cafes, restaurants, gaming studios and other recreational places because of lockdown. The community movement to Grocery and Pharmacy points is reduced by 55%; the movement to parks by 45% and transit stations movement came down by 62% because of shutting down of major transit stations. The movement to workplaces has come down by 42% within last 6 weeks as most government and private offices have ordered their employees to work from home. This also includes the closure of educational institutions and large workforce working in education sector.

Figure 1: Comparative Statistics of Mobility Change Estimates by Google (%)

	USA	Pakistan	UK	India	Italy
Retail	-47	-70	-85	-77	-94
Grocery	-22	-55	-46	-65	-85
Parks	-19	-45	-52	-57	-90
Transit	-51	-62	-75	-71	-87
Workplaces	-38	-41	-55	-47	-63
Residential	12	18	15	22	24

In comparison to other countries, mobility in Pakistan has been significantly higher coupled with the lesser degree of lockdown, and loopholes in enforcing the lockdown. The United States is having the greatest number of cases of Corona, and resorting only to a partial shut-down hints as plausible cause. With lesser percentage moving in and out of country, Pakistan still needs to have further accurate measures to contain the COVID-19.

Figure 3: Comparative Mobility Report (%)

Other than the contingent availability of data and permissions allowed through the mobile settings in individual phone sets, this data can be used as a guide for business and governmental decision making.

- The governments can reach out to Google to understand and map-out the high-mobility zones and focus on averting COVID-19 spread in particular areas, assisting in compliance of lockdowns.
- Google data is also showing high concentration of people through worldwide hospitals and spots linked to healthcare in any way. These projections must be aiding tool in devising any policy decisions in localities.
- Businesses can understand the degree of lockdowns and decide on their supply chains.

---

[i] Data Source: https://www.google.com/covid19/mobility/

Hafeez Ur Rehman Hadi, PIDE

Pakistan Institute of Development Economics
Web: www. pide.org.pk, Twitter: @PIDEpk, Facebook: PIDEIslamabad