

Mobility and social outlook

Hafeez Ur Rehman Hadi

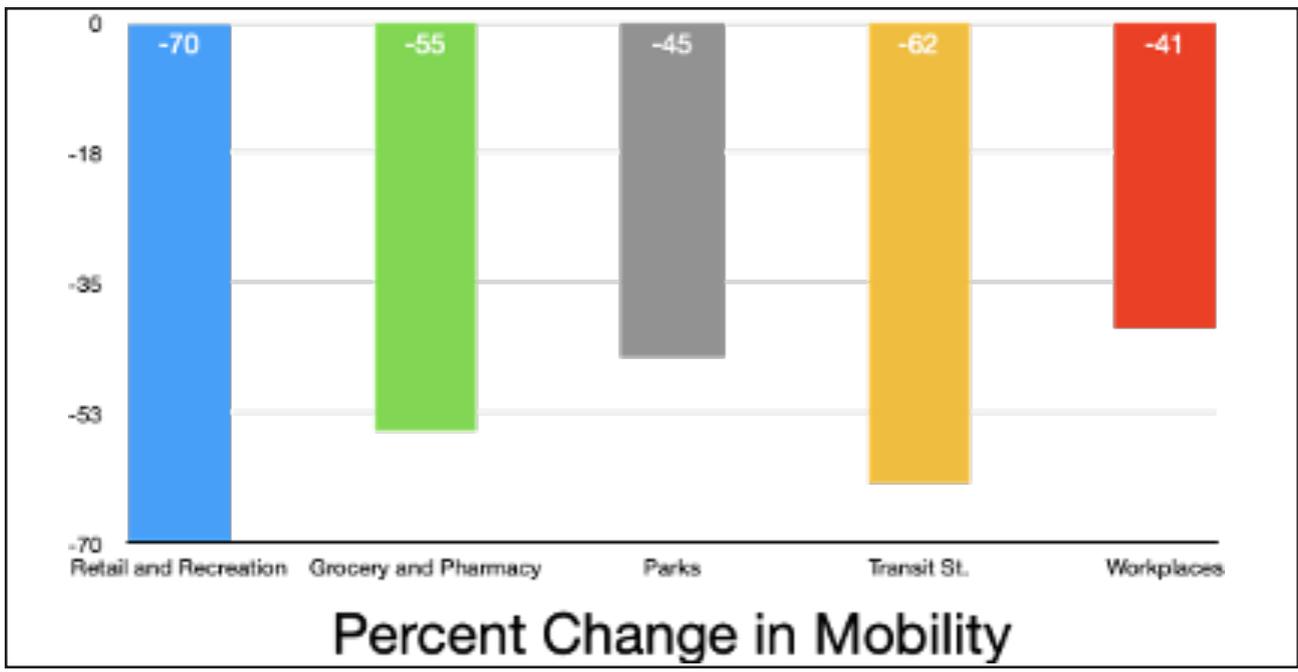
The country has been in lockdown, the economic activity has plummeted, and it is advised to stay at home in these testing times of COVID-19, as the second wave is taking a toll. Despite the clear government orders, authoritative instructions and awareness campaigns, people are less-heeded to comply with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

This article was written in April to understand the people's willingness to stay at home in face of COVID. Much of the situation remains same.

However, the trickle-down effects of economic slowdown are creeping in 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 clear precipitous slow-down in mobility with the help of surveilling mechanisms of geo-locating the people.

Google started reporting the mobility changes on the baseline media of the 5-week spanning since January 3, 2020 to February 6, 2020. Based on these baseline medians, the google has been updating the mobility reports regularly. As per the data, till March 26, 2020 there is a significant decrease observable in the mobility within Pakistan.

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 has been updating its reports.

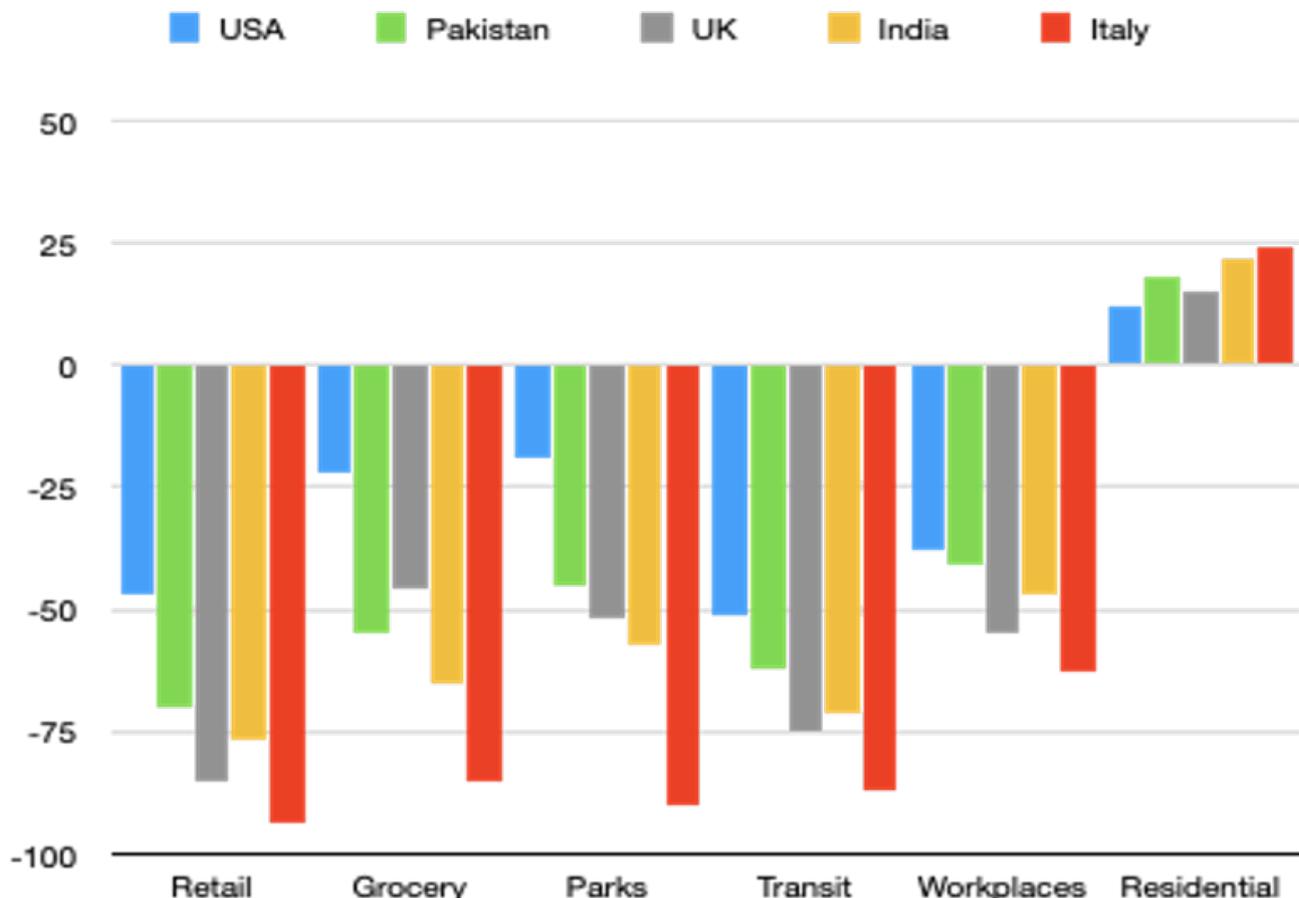
Governments worldwide are partnering with the Google, and using Google Data, to keep people at their homes, and in case of unusual gatherings and the rush, the local administration is alerted to disperse the people.

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. The community movement to Grocery and Pharmacy points reduced by 55%; the movement to parks by 45% and transit stations came down by 62% because of shutting down major transit stations. The movement to workplaces has come down by 42% within last 6 weeks.

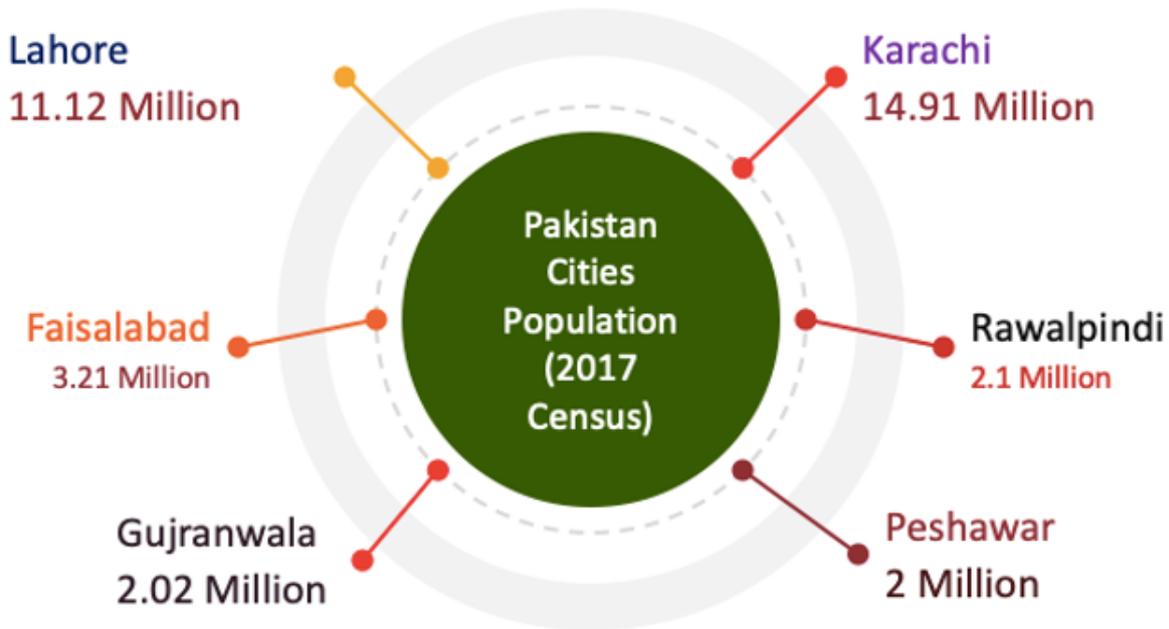
Community Mobility Report. *Estimates by Google

	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 with other countries, the movement in Pakistan, comparatively, has been significantly more concluding the lesser degree of lockdown and loopholes in enforcing the lockdown.



There is a strict enforcement of lockdown in Italy, as observable through statistics, after the sudden explosion of deaths and number of Corona infected patients since mid-march. This degree of rise in patients called for such extreme measures, and fear and panic looms in Italy. 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.

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 decision making, 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.

Businesses can understand the degree of lockdowns and decide on their supply chain matters.

Resorting to Car Ownership

1. Walking?

The Urban Population wants to exercise mobility, but the greener option of walking is harmful, unavailable and dangerous.

3. Public Transport

The people can use public transport, rails as cheaper and shared modes of transport. But these are unavailable, inaccessible and limited to fewer routes.

2. Cycling?

The Bicycling can lead to a greater health, less combustion, and fewer cars on road. But there are no cycle lanes on roads in Pakistan.

4. Cars?

First three options force people to own cars and facilitate the sprawl leading to GHG emissions, health hazards, higher costs and no public spaces.

