

**A PLEA FOR THE BETTER  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
OF BENGAL, PP. 1-165**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649526208

A Plea for the Better Local Government of Bengal, pp. 1-165 by Robert Carstairs

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.  
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

[www.triestepublishing.com](http://www.triestepublishing.com)

**ROBERT CARSTAIRS**

**A PLEA FOR THE BETTER  
LOCAL GOVERNMENT  
OF BENGAL, PP. 1-165**



A Plea for  
the  
Better Local Government  
of Bengal

BY

ROBERT CARSTAIRS

LATE INDIAN CIVIL SERVICE  
AUTHOR OF 'BRITISH WORK IN INDIA'; 'HUMAN NATURE IN  
RURAL INDIA'

London

MACMILLAN AND CO., LIMITED

NEW YORK: THE MACMILLAN COMPANY

1904

*All rights reserved*

IS  
703E  
EAL  
330

0850860-234

## CONTENTS

	PAGE
CHAPTER I	
REASONS FOR WRITING . . . . .	1
CHAPTER II	
DESCRIPTION OF PEOPLE—RELIGION . . . . .	3
CHAPTER III	
TRADITIONAL INSTANCES . . . . .	13
CHAPTER IV	
MANNER OF LIFE . . . . .	17
CHAPTER V	
VILLAGE INSTITUTIONS—RELATIONS WITH GOVERNMENT . . . . .	26
CHAPTER VI	
SEARCH FOR A MOTIVE POWER . . . . .	55
CHAPTER VII	
CONDITIONS OF SUCCESS . . . . .	67

vi Local Government of Bengal

CHAPTER VIII

	PAGE
CO-OPERATION—STARTING POINT . . . . .	75

CHAPTER IX

MACHINERY . . . . .	93
---------------------	----

CHAPTER X

ORGANISATION . . . . .	106
------------------------	-----

CHAPTER XI

TAXATION . . . . .	116
--------------------	-----

CHAPTER XII

POLICE . . . . .	133
------------------	-----

CHAPTER XIII

ROADS . . . . .	146
-----------------	-----

CHAPTER XIV

POSSIBLE DEVELOPMENTS . . . . .	167
---------------------------------	-----



## CHAPTER I

### REASONS FOR WRITING

RELIEVING that I have something of use to say on the subject of Local Government in my old province of Bengal, I take the opportunity, on the eve of my retirement from the service of Government, of jotting down such ideas about it as seem worthy of record.

Bengal is a province having an area of 150,000 square miles and a population of over seventy millions. It is divided into forty-seven districts, each under a district officer, who is to his district what the colonel is to his regiment, or the captain to his ship.

At the head of the province is the Lieutenant-Governor with his Legislative Council, four secretaries, and some fifteen heads of departments. Independent of him, and controlling the judges, is the High Court.

The Lieutenant-Governor is under the Viceroy, and he under the Secretary of State, who represents the British nation.

The office of the Lieutenant-Governor was created

## 2 Local Government of Bengal

just before the great Mutiny, up to which time the province was administered direct by the Governor-General, who, since the Mutiny and the transfer of the Government from the Company to the Crown, has also been known as Viceroy.

Since the creation of this office, the province has in many respects become more like a State. Its Government has become more and more elaborate—department after department being added to the staff, and laws and rules innumerable having been evolved. As facilities of communication—railways, telegraphs, and post office—have increased, the headquarters staff of the Government has come to take a much more active part in the details of the administration.

The administrative staff is divided into two great classes—the headquarters staff and the “mofussil” or, as we would say, “country” staff.

These two great classes have, owing to circumstances, drifted apart. My remarks are made from the point of view of the “mofussil” staff, to which I have belonged throughout my service.

## CHAPTER II

### DESCRIPTION OF PEOPLE—RELIGION

As the key to the problem of Local Government is the finding of a motive power, I shall try to convey to the reader an idea of the people who are to be dealt with, of the efforts made in the past by Government in search of a motive power, of what are the conditions of success, and what is the existing state of things, which must be our starting-point.

The chief points about the people which should be noticed are (a) religion, (b) instincts, (c) manner of life, (d) occupation, (e) institutions, (f) relations with one another, and (g) relations with Government.

Religion is the most important part of every man's life—the strongest motive, and the strongest restraint.

In order of numbers the people are divided into Hindoos, Mahomedans, Animists, Buddhists, Christians, and smaller bodies.

The Hindoos are by far the most numerous, and are arranged in castes, the most sacred being the Bramin. Modern Hinduism is Braminism. The Bramin caste claims for its members divine origin, and the worship of all Hindoos; to be fed, obeyed,