



# "Redefining Hierarchies: The Role of Level Jumping in Combating Red Tape and Enhancing Modern Organizational Behavior"

**Pallavi Devi**

MASTERS OF ARTS in Public Policy, Law and Governance, Central University of Rajasthan

## **Abstract:**

This paper seeks to establish an elementary approach to understand the blue print of the Redefining Hierarchies in the context of Modern Organizations. In this paper, I will explore the evolving dimensions of organizational behavior in administration. The hierarchy between superiors and subordinates is a fundamental principle in organizations, ensuring the institution's smooth operation. However, this hierarchical structure may need to be adjusted to fit different circumstances. Decision-making can sometimes become excessively slow and prone to corruption. To address this, India introduced the 'File Jumping Experiment' a few years ago, designed to bypass intermediate hierarchical levels, allowing documents to reach the decision-making authority directly. This Level Jumping can be beneficial in certain administrative contexts. My research is based on both theoretical and empirical in nature. I have studied the attitudes of Employees who are currently engaged in various organizations which include employees of a Media House, an Educational Organization and an NPO; I have thoroughly observed the behavior patterns of Employees; their beliefs, norms and experiences on Hierarchy, Level Jumping and Red Tape. I have authorized 50 samples. Moreover, different research papers, journals, electronic sources have helped me in gathering secondary data. This research paper aims to address the limitations of traditional hierarchies, such as slow decision-making, bureaucratic inefficiencies, inadequate transparency between superiors and subordinates, and a lack of organizational flexibility. By exploring the concept of level jumping, the study seeks to propose solutions for enhancing decision-making speed, reducing red tape, improving transparency, and increasing adaptability within organizations.

**Keywords:** Hierarchy, Level Jumping, File Jumping Experiment, Red Tapism, Organizational Behavior, Decision making, Transparency.

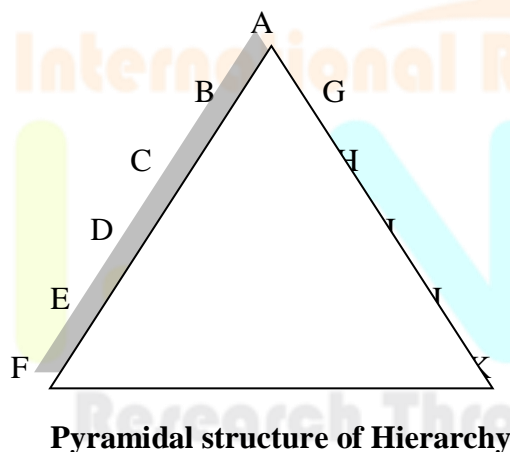
## **1.1. Introduction:**

The primary concept of hierarchy is a ranking system that organizes things into levels of importance or authority. It's a way of establishing order and structure within a system, be it a social organization, a corporation, or even in a family. The Classical Theory of hierarchy can be traced back to the early development of human societies. Hierarchies have evolved as a natural response to the need for structured coordination, efficiency, and management of resources and people. As societies and organizations grow in complexity, a hierarchical structure helps streamline decision-making processes and task delegation, ensuring efficient management and coordination. Superiors can monitor subordinates' performance, ensuring

accountability and adherence to organizational goals and policies. According to Evolution Theory, historically, hierarchies have been present in various forms, from tribal leadership to feudal systems and modern corporations. Gradually, Modern organizational hierarchy theories have evolved significantly from traditional hierarchical structures, reflecting changes in technology, communication, and management philosophies. Firstly, Modern philosophy of Hierarchy is like a Flat Hierarchy; reducing the number of layers between staff and management to create a more egalitarian structure, which enhanced communication, quicker decision-making, increased employee empowerment, and flexibility. Secondly, Modern hierarchy should follow decentralized management system where decision-making authority is distributed through self-organizing teams or "circles." Thirdly, Networked Organization; organizations should operate through a network of interconnected teams rather than a strict hierarchy. This process enhanced collaboration, rapid innovation, and access to diverse skills and knowledge. Fourthly, Modern Hierarchy focuses on Teal Organizations based on principles of self-management, wholeness, and evolutionary purpose, inspired by Frederic Laloux's "Reinventing Organizations." Which empowered employees, focus on purpose and values, and innovative practices. Fifthly, the most popular structure of modern theory is the Matrix Structure of Hierarchy, combines functional and project-based structures, where employees report to both functional and project managers. It is helpful for flexible team configurations, and balanced decision-making.

## 2.1. Main Theme:

Structure of Hierarchy: Organization refers to the allocation of tasks among a certain group of individuals. The distribution of roles and duties occurs both horizontally and vertically. An organizational structure expands in both directions. Adding more levels to an organizational structure is known as vertical expansion, while incorporating additional functions without increasing the number of levels is termed horizontal expansion. Vertical distribution establishes layers such as Top Management, Middle Management, and Lower Management. Due to the varying nature of responsibilities at different levels, differences in salary scales, and the qualities of employees at each level, superior-subordinate relationships naturally emerge within the organization. Hierarchy involves the universal implementation of superior-subordinate relationships across multiple levels of responsibility, extending from the top to the bottom of the structure.



The diagram illustrates the hierarchical structure of an organization, with A at the pinnacle. A leads the organization, and B reports to A. C directly reports to B and is also accountable to A. Communication must also follow the same chain in the opposite direction. For instance, if F needs to send a message to K, it must go through E, D, C, B, and A. This exemplifies the chain of command within the organization. However, this procedure can be very time-consuming, sometimes taking an extremely long time to reach a decision. In reality, shortcuts are often used to delay actions without breaking the fundamental principle of hierarchy. According to Henry Fayol, a bridge can be created across the formal lines of authority within the hierarchy, allowing subordinate officers in one department to communicate directly with their counterparts in other departments. F and K in the pyramid diagram can interact with each other directly without adhering to the rule

of following the proper channel<sup>1</sup> (Study Material for public administration, IGNOU notes for pub ad UPSC civil service exam.).

**Role of Level Jumping:** Bypassing intermediate levels in a hierarchy is known as level jumping. This can expedite communication between superiors and subordinates, streamlining workflow. In essence, if C informs B about their conversation with A, then A and C can communicate directly. This similar concept was implemented by the Indian government through the File Jumping Experiment. Effective communication and trust between superiors and subordinates at all levels can significantly reduce delays inherent in hierarchical structures. As Urwick aptly pointed out, while a scalar chain is essential for any organization, it shouldn't be the sole channel of communication<sup>2</sup> (Raj, 2023).

**Red Tape and Corruption:** The author Sergei Guriev in his paper Red Tape and Corruption examines the rise and interaction of various forms of corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency within a hierarchical structure. Bureaucratic inefficiency and corruption are arguably the oldest and most prevalent afflictions of administrative systems. They have been witnessed in all societies and there is no indication that they will vanish soon. Numerous efforts to combat either issue appear to have yielded only limited success. A significant challenge with addressing corruption and bureaucratic inefficiency is that they cannot be tackled in isolation. Corruption in one segment of a hierarchy may originate from corruption in another; excessive bureaucratic procedures may arise due to potential corruption; bribes may be solicited because of potentially high levels of inefficiency. When aiming to enhance the effectiveness of public administration, it is crucial to consider these interdependencies to address the root causes rather than the symptoms<sup>3</sup> (Guriev, 2003). Secondly, M Fazekas wrote different types of Red Tape and Corruption, mainly: Low level or petty corruption and High level or Favoritism, both relate with misusing power in the name of Hierarchy<sup>4</sup> (Fazekas, 2017). Thirdly, Aditya Dasgupta in his study examines the distributive politics of bureaucratic red tape, the time-consuming administrative obstacles. A straightforward model indicates that red tape can have potentially progressive effects when used by a socially welfare-maximizing planner to filter out high-income individuals with high opportunity costs of time. However, when executed by a corrupt bureaucrat, red tape also proves regressive, excluding poorer individuals who might be willing to pay but lack the means to afford the bribes needed to bypass red tape. This creates arbitrage opportunities for clientelist intermediaries who specialize in alleviating red tape in return for the political allegiance of impoverished voters<sup>5</sup> (Dasgupta, 2018). Moreover, there is a long list of Red tape and corruption across the world. Here are some examples of them: The Delhi Commonwealth Games in 2010 were marred by extensive red tape and corruption. The event was intended to showcase India's ability to host an international sporting event, but it instead became notorious for inefficiency and mismanagement<sup>6</sup> (Twisted tale of the Commonwealth Game Scam). Enron's collapse in 2001 was due to extensive corporate fraud, involving deceptive financial practices and manipulation of accounts to conceal debts and exaggerate profits<sup>7</sup> (Enron Scandal). The Petrobras Scandal was uncovered in 2014, this scandal revealed systemic corruption at the Brazilian state oil company, with executives accepting bribes for inflated contracts<sup>8</sup> (Petrobras Scandal). The VA Healthcare Scandal that was exposed in 2014, it highlighted severe bureaucratic inefficiencies and data manipulation by VA employees, compromising healthcare services for

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.scribd.com/document/219786157/Public-Administration-Unit-22-Hierarchy>

<sup>2</sup> Public administration (2023), especially Unit 1, chapter 2 - Principles of Organization, by Rohit Raj and Aditya Raj.

<sup>3</sup> Red Tape and Corruption (2003), by Sergei Guriev.

<sup>4</sup> Red Tape, Bribery, and Government Favoritism: Evidence from Europe (2017), by Mihaly Fazekas .

<sup>5</sup> Red Tape, Corruption and Distributive Politics (2018), by Aditya Dasgupta.

<sup>6</sup> Twisted tale of the commonwealth game scam :

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concerns\\_and\\_controversies\\_at\\_the\\_2010\\_Commonwealth\\_Games](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Concerns_and_controversies_at_the_2010_Commonwealth_Games)

<sup>7</sup> Enron Scandal: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Enron-scandal>

<sup>8</sup> Petrobras Scandal: <https://www.britannica.com/event/Petrobras-scandal>



veterans<sup>9</sup> (2014 Veterans Health Administration Controversy). This isn't the full explanation. We've encountered bureaucratic obstacles at every level, from the ground up. For a layman, getting files or bills approved in any public or private sector office is a nightmare. Nowadays, a new form of bureaucracy has emerged in the form of online portals, which are intended to expedite processes but end up taking even longer to complete tasks. Consequently, these online portals are ineffective in practical terms. Under the guise of fast online services, many officials are delaying the processing of files.

### 3.1. Findings and Conclusion:

I have collected 50 samples to gather data and insights regarding the overall structure of hierarchy and its characteristics from various employees working in different organizations. I have selected employees from a media house, an educational institution, and a non-profit organization. Here is the analysis of the data:

1. Responses of people on how they described the current hierarchical structure in their organization is:
  - ✓ 66.7% of respondents said the structure is moderately rigid
  - ✓ 16.7% said it's very rigid
  - ✓ Another 16.7% said it's flexible

This suggests that most people believe their organization has a somewhat hierarchical structure, but not an extremely rigid one. A smaller percentage of people said the structure is very rigid or flexible.

2. The results of the survey question asking if people believe the traditional hierarchical model is effective for decision-making in their organization or not:
  - ✓ 50% of respondents said yes
  - ✓ 50% said no.

This data suggests that opinions are divided on the effectiveness of the traditional hierarchical model in this organization for decision-making. But, half of the population believes that traditional hierarchy is also not effective in some case.

3. The level of familiarity with the concept of "Level Jumping" or "File Jumping Experiments." is:
  - ✓ 66.7% of the respondents said they are familiar with the concept.
  - ✓ 33.3% said they are not familiar.

This suggests that a significant majority of the people who responded to the survey are familiar with the concepts of "Level Jumping" or "File Jumping Experiments."

4. The data shows how people initially feel about bypassing intermediate levels to speed up decision-making.
  - ✓ 50% of respondents are very positive about it.
  - ✓ 16.7% of respondents are somewhat positive.
  - ✓ 16.7% of respondents are neutral.
  - ✓ 16.7% of respondents are somewhat negative or very negative.

Overall, a majority (66.7%) of respondents view bypassing intermediate levels to speed up decision-making in a positive light.

<sup>9</sup> 2014 veterans Health Administration Controversy :

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014\\_Veterans\\_Health\\_Administration\\_controversy#:~:text=An%20internal%20VA%20audit%20released,waiting%20times%20appear%20more%20favorable](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Veterans_Health_Administration_controversy#:~:text=An%20internal%20VA%20audit%20released,waiting%20times%20appear%20more%20favorable)

5. The results of the survey question regarding implementing level jumping to reduce bureaucratic delays in an organization are:
- ✓ 66.7% of respondents strongly agree that implementing level jumping could reduce bureaucratic delays.
  - ✓ 33.3% of respondents either disagree or are neutral on the issue.

This suggests that a significant majority of respondents believe that level jumping could be an effective way to reduce bureaucratic delays in their organization.

6. Employees responded to the question about reducing hierarchical levels to enhance employee empowerment and innovation:
- ✓ 66.7% of respondents agree.
  - ✓ 16.7% of respondents are neutral.
  - ✓ 16.7% of respondents disagree or strongly disagree.

Based on this data, a two-thirds majority of employees believe that reducing hierarchical levels would lead to greater employee empowerment and innovation. A smaller percentage of respondents are neutral on the issue, while another segment disagrees.

7. The survey question asking employees if they would support a pilot program to test level jumping in their organization or not:
- ✓ 33.3% of respondents said yes
  - ✓ 33.3% said no
  - ✓ 33.3% said maybe.

The data suggests that one-third of respondents are in favor, one-third is opposed, and one-third is undecided.

One of the Responses has given a brilliant argument that suggests all organizations should promote employees gradually, similar to how bankers traditionally rise through the ranks, where they gain experience in all areas from clerk to chairman. Here, to conclude my study, I would like to offer some key suggestions. Firstly, bureaucratic red tape is prevalent everywhere, whether in esteemed government institutions or small NGOs. I have observed many administrative departments in prestigious universities adopting this practice at the grassroots level, where students and their parents endure the ordeal of not clearing their bills, files, or certificates. We cannot blame the entire system, as it is composed of individuals. Therefore, we must focus on the ethics of officials before recruiting them for any position, ensuring their loyalty. We should provide newly recruited employees with comprehensive training on efficient, customer- or client-friendly practices. Additionally, there should be policy reforms to strengthen anti-corruption measures and enhance laws. In the context of modern digitalization, corruption often occurs under the veil of online portals; thus, it is essential to develop efficient, user-friendly online systems that are straightforward and not overly complex. These portals should be transparent, allowing users to track the status of their files and applications. Moreover, a crucial element of any revolutionary reform is the Public Feedback Mechanism. Often, due to the absence of a feedback process, systems remain outdated and rigid, leading to inefficiencies. Implementing a robust feedback mechanism can drive significant change in the future.

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