3.1 Introduction: Halfway House:

*Halfway House* (1969) projects a minute depiction of relations in family life and simultaneously exposes changeover of principles in the modern India. Mohan Rakesh projects a couple Savitri and Mahendranath with their elder daughter, Binni, son, Ashok and younger daughter, Kinni. It is a modern family which is devoid of traditional Indian ethics. Savitri is the wage earner of the familial life. On the other hand the husband Mahendranath is unemployed. Even it is observed that Savitri keeps illegal relationship with other male, such as Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja.

Nevertheless, as is completely exposed in the Prologue, the man in the black suit is a *Sutradhar* (A commentator). It is this *Sutradhar* expresses the perspective of the dramatist. Also this man plays all roles of -Man one, Man two, Man three, and Man four as their names respectively Mahendranath, Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja. It can be deeply analysed in the following way.

3.1.1 Husband-wife Relationship: Mahendranth and Saviri:

The opening representation of the play is nothing but a sad projection of familial life in *Halfway House*. Saviri comes weary after a day’s lengthy labor in the place of work and finds that the house is unclean. She expresses her anger as;

**The woman:** Phe-e-ew...! No one’s ever at home! Kinni! Out I suppose!...Another torn book! And Ashok’s been...! Idle all day but he can’t look after his clothes...or even clear the table! Everything’s left for me to do. ¹
This expression of Savitri exposes the unenthusiastic impression of the home. At the outset, this familial structure can be rememberes as a matriarchal family, the main cause is financial. Therefore the husband Mahendranath feels vary sad about his worse condition in his family. In this context P. Lal remarks:

Man must become conscious the wholeness of his reality; his position…of the whole, his poverty loses its one great worth.²

Savitri continuously compares husband to other males such as Singhana, Jagmohan and Juneja. She seems to be such woman who finds on both sides of two worlds, the one of individual satisfaction as well as the children accountability. Nevertheless, the conventional Indian wife desires her husband to give all needs in the familial life, but Savitri’s husband is not capable to offer and Savitri starts to think her life is worthless with her companion. But on the other hand Savitri is not following the true philosophy as it is said in Buddhism- Punya sambhara-Virtue is the base on which the man who is wise.³ Even it is mentioned and differed by P. L. Narasu as: It is like unto fire which consumes all things that exist between heaven and earth, great and small and illegal relations of wife means becomes ignoble.⁴

Mahendranath’s dialogues communicate the nervousness, the psychological commotion. Therefor in Mahendranath’s dialogues repetition and omission of expressions replicate the unseen agitation. For example;

The Older Girl: There is Something.

The First Man: It’s nothing. Your mother was saying....

The Older Girl: What was she saying?

The First Man: Nothing...actually....I was just saying.⁵

Uncertainty of Mahendranath has exposed from beginning to end his dialogues. Even his utterances have dissimilar tones, also he confused when desires to express his dilemma. Thus, Mahendranath is very displeased to be acquainted with Savitri’s invition of her boss, Singhana. Consequently, he always departs from the house whenever her boss comes to meet him. On the other hand, Mahendranath has not submissiveness so he expresses;
The First Man: Yes, I do. For how many years have I been bearing the burden of life? And for how many years have I been looking after this family? And despite that, what have I come to ... that everyone answers me back, is rude, disrespectful, impertinent and ....

By this way Mahendranath expressed reality that he is mistreated in his own domicile. Therefore Mahendranath engages himself in meeting with his friend. But time to time when he gets chance to express his emotions he says:

The First Man: On no grounds. I am of no use, of no use at all. I’m only an idler... to be kicked and bullied just as you please. Can anyone tell me why I should stay here? (Silence) You can’t, can you?

On the other hand, Mahendranath’s personality seems to be aggravated. Mahendranath begins to hate Savitri since of her relations with Singhania, Jagmohan. Mahendranath is exposed from side to side by conversation between Savitri and Jagmohan and Singhania. Savitri always blames her husband as he is unable to fulfill household duties. Mahendranath seems to follow patriarchal principles where he wants to be a dominating colleague while Savitri is not ready to accept this. That is the reason why this attitude leads to the wedded disput between husband and wife. Therefore Binni blames her father as:

The Older Girl: you can’t imagine what it was like...Daddy’s rages when he tore Mama’s clothes to shreds...when he gagged her and beat her up behind closed doors...dragging her by the hair to the WC....(shudders) I can’t even recount the fearful scenes I’ve witnessed in this house!
Nevertheless, Savitri’s prospect is very different, she desires to have very bold and wealthy husband. So Savitri says: “What is it that makes a man really a man?” Even she asks another query: “doesn’t being a man involve something more? Personality..? Strength of character..?” Savitri expects lot from her husband. Even she wants her husband must keep all strength as a complete modern man. So she remarks: “For that he has to be complete in and for himself.”

Such critical situation projects that Mahendranath’s marriage is on the verge of destroy. He is very sad with her wife and its influence finds deep submissive condition on other family members.

### 3.1.2 Savitri and Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja:

Singhania is wearing jacket and trousers. Singhania is chief in workplace where Savitri works. Singhania is a triumphant man. He is really praised by Savitri. It is observed that Singhania is connected with humorous and self-important personality. Singhania is disdainful, and full of narcissistic. He starts his discussion with rudeness, surface judgment. For instance, Singhania’s discussion when Savitri inquires about a job for her son, Singhania replyies in his own way as;

**The Second Man:** What?

**The Woman:** That if… that if you have a good job in view..

**The Second Man:** It’s delicious!

**The Woman:** You were kind enough to….

**The Second Man:** Yes, yes… you did mention something. For a cousin of yours.. no, that was Mrs. Malhotra. Who was it you mentioned?

**The Woman:** (looks at the Boy) Him.

**The Second Man:** Hmm, hmm what exam has he passed? B. Com.?
Singhania’s bumbling way of communication creates more confusion than throw clear light upon any subject. He is such a confused mind that when he is offered tea he starts giving a talk on tea, and then on coffee and then on the climate, labour problems at home, youth unrest and so on. He has to be constantly reminded that the job is for the boy. Savitri has to repeat Ashok’s bio-data again. Again Singhania confuses Air Freez with Air Inida; perhaps the words Air. Again he twice praises coffee. By this way he pretends to be an extremely busy mind, or he is a definitely confused man, when again he asks Ashok, ‘What division did you get in your B.Sc.? He seems to be more interested in Savitri and Binni than to help other. For instance, he persistently believes that the older girl, Binni appeared for an interview obviously implying that her placement is due to his goodwill. Binni had of course not appeared in any such interview. By this way Singhania engages Binni in cozy conversation. He seems to be interested in Binni. However, after assuring Savitri that he would help Ashok, while leaving Singhania asks Savitri to visit his house. Savitri says that she would come to see his Baby. The words which are revealing of the debased moral character of the man are;

The Second Man: She keeps asking why Aunty hasn’t been over. She loves her Aunties! Not having a mother, the poor thing.\(^\text{13}\)

Thus, Savitri is not the only one who visits Singhania, there are other women employees who have been visiting the widower boss who has a big house and thus ample scope for entertaining himself with other women. Here, playwright seems to project the character of boss through Singhania who uses his status to exploit his women employees for immoral purposes.

Singhania is full of self importance and every bit of conversation is twisted to show that he has travelled all over the world. Self-praise is the key-word with him.

The Second Man: Oh I see, see... the climate of this country is such, what can on do? Now take the climate of Italy for instance. I did a lot of travelling last year. One has to in my position. I went all over Europe but... no other country can compete with Italy! Do you know what is so special about...It’s delicious! Where did
you get it? (looks at his watch) It’s already five past seven. I think…

However, Singhania remains unappealing and exploitative. The boss represents the class of exploitative employers who prey upon weaknesses of people in subordinate positions to their advantage. What he offers to Savitri is opportunity for her son and the role of ‘Aunty’ to Savitri. Thus, he represents only another face of tyranny and so is entirely unsuitable for the woman. Nevertheless, Savitri continues to entertain him in the hope of gaining even little from his higher status.

At last, Singhania starts his car to go but it does not start and Ashok is sent to push the car. The woman notices the sketch and it reminds her husband. When Binni tells her that Ashok has drawn this portrait of Singhania, she gets angry. But Ashok seems in jovial mood and his sarcastic comment makes laugh, ‘what a face and what a car! …the engine of the car may start up with a push but as far as (points to his forehead) this engine is concerned…. (39)

Jagmohan’s transfer back to Delhi was hinted by Mahendranath to Savitri. Savitri feels so confident to meet Jagmohan and to open her heart. Before Jagmohan’s arrival the conversation takes place between Savitri and Binni reveals that Savitri’s decision is to leave the house ‘forever’. She feels so confident that she informs Binni that the next time she comes, she ‘may not be here’ as:

The Women: I want to tell you something.

The Older Girl: May I put these away? The room is so untidy! Before Uncle Jagmohan comes I should…

The Woman: I’ll make it brief.

The Older Girl: Well?

The Woman: When you come next time I may not be here.

The Older Girl: Mama!

The Woman: That is why I telephoned Jagmohan today.

The Older Girl: So..?
The Woman: So now…whatever happens, will happen.

The Older Girl: You’ve really thought it over and decided …?

The Woman: Yes. You can go now.¹⁶

The Third Man, Jagmohan enter from the street door. He is dressed in a sports shirt and trousers, carries a cigarette tin in his hand and makes chain-smoke throughout his stay. Jagmohan arrives to meet her while Savitri is busy observing the negative effects of time on her face and brooding over her rebellion. Jagmohan blows smoke rings and addresses her ‘Hello, Cuckoo.’ This is how Jagmohan greets her and during their conversation Savitri calls him Jog, which shows their intimacy. Jagmohan is only interested in playing with a woman and Savitri’s seriousness has no meaning for him. He is very casual to chat such as:

The Woman: But I told you to come straight here, without wasting a moment!

The Third Man: I didn’t waste a moment! At the Pole Star…

The Woman: Never mind, your excuses are not new to me...

The Third Man: (sit down) Have it your way. It isn’t new to me either…being blamed without reason…

The Woman: Aren’t we going?

The Third Man: In a minute. Sit down. (The Woman sits down unwillingly) The way you rang up suddenly made me think that…

The Woman: (puts her hand on his) Jog!

The Third Man: What is matter, Cuckoo! ¹⁷

Thus, Jagmohan shows his careless nature towards Savitri. In fact she is hoping much from him and her voice is choking with tears. But his interest shifts from mother to daughter and then to a book. However, he takes her to a hotel. But his responses her give ample indication of
the futility of her endeavour. It also shows meaninglessness of relationship in the modern age.

Jagmohan is very polished man and now that he has matured enough, he has drastically changed.

Now he is extremely conscious of his status, his position in society and is wary of reviving an affair with a mother of three children after a long gap of eighteen to nineteen years.

Savitri tells Jagmohan that she wants to talk to him about something serious. Jagmohan suggests that they could talk in the house, but Savitri wants to go out to some place where she can talk to him freely and open up her mind. Jagmohan has no objection and they walk out without taking tea which Binni was preparing. However, Savitri returns house with dejected and defeated mood. Her return clearly shows that Jagmohan has rejected her proposal and she cannot think of starting alone her individual life. She does not tell anything about her meeting with Jagmohan, but Juneja correctly guesses what might have happened. He says:

**The Fourth Man:** But every other year you’ve tried to free yourself by looking around for another man!..you met Jagmohan. You admired him of his excellent contacts, his smart way of life, his generosity.

But the real reason was the same; no matter what he was, he was Jagmohan…not Mahendra.¹⁸

Thus, Juneja speaks with great confidence when he analyses the cause of Savitri and Mahendranath’s misery. The words reveal that what might have happened between Jagmohan and Savitri. The accuracy of Janeja’s description is confirmed by Savitri’s astonishment when he recounts the whole incident between her and Jagmohan as if he had been a witness to it. The purpose of Janeja’s revelations is to make aware Savitri and recognize her responsibility in the familial life.

At the outset, it is observed that Juneja is a very practical man. Mahendranath always meets him whenever he has problems. However Juneja presents Savitri’s illegal relationship with insensitive words;

**The Fourth Man:** But every other year you’ve tried to free yourself by looking around for another man! In the beginning I was one of these men. After me, you were enamoured of Shevjeet…his
university degree, his trips abroad, or whatever. Then you met Jagmohan. You admired him for his excellent contacts, his smart way of life, his generosity.  

Juneja’s dialogue exposed the true nature of Savitri. Savitri desires to have an ideal husband in her life. She is always looking very decent man who will fulfil her wishes. Even she does not observe traditional Indian cultural principles in her life as she keeps illegal relationship with Shevjeet and Jagmohan. So Juneja added:

**The Fourth Man:** You would still have encountered a Mahendra, a Juneja, a Shivjeet or a Jagmohan and thought and reacted in the same way. Because the meaning of life to you is how many different things you can have and enjoy at the same time. One man alone could never have given them to you, so no matter whom you married, you would always have felt as empty and as restless as you do today…

Savitri always finds some incongruity in husband so she keeps relationship with Shivjeet, Manoj and Jagmohan. In short, Juneja presents the the past of Savitri’s illegal relationship with other men. Savitri breaks traditional Indian cultural values.

### 3.1.3 Savitri and her children:

Savitri treats her children in such despicable manner to some extend as it to remind one of the old days of slavery. The elder son, Ashok, is incapable to do in his living. He is needy and always expects a number of things from his mother. Sometimes he looks very sad and frustrated. For instance in discussion with Singhania he expresses very different manner;

**The Boy:** I mean exactly what I said. Whoever you’ve invited up to now...Why did you do so?

**The Woman:** Why do you think?
The Boy: For the glamour of it all. An intellectual. A man with a salary of five thousand. A Chief Commissioner. Whenever you’ve invited anyone, it hasn’t been for the person himself but...because of his name, his salary, his position.

It is one kind of disgraceful rupture of a young boy, Ashok. There is another character in this family that is Binni who has married Manoj. She sometimes comes to meet mother and father. But her marriage is also distressed. She has come without any baggage. The younger daughter, Kinni, always becomes the reason of one of the disorders in the home. Because she is ignored by mother and father even her difficulties are not solved. For this condition, Savitri seems accountable because she unable to keep calm nature in house. By this way Halfway House, exposes the conflict between husband and wife, mother and children, father and children.

It is noteworthy that Halfway house projects breakdown of traditional cultural Indian values which enable to join every family member as one being. On the other hand familial life of Mahendranth and Savitri seems to be very sad with their own shortcomings.

3.1.4 Influence of Indian Ethos:

Webster’s Dictionary defines a noun ‘Indian’ as “a native or inhabitant of India or the East Indies.” However, Webster’s Dictionary defines noun ‘ethos’ as “the distinguishing character, sentiment, moral nature, or guiding beliefs of a person, group, or institution; also: ethic.” Cambridge Dictionary defines noun ‘ethos’ as “the set of beliefs, ideas, etc. about social behaviour and relationships of a person or group.” The New Oxford Dictionary defines it as “the characteristic spirit of a culture, era, or community as manifested in its attitudes and aspirations.”

‘Indian ethos’ can be interpreted along with its complex and manifold facets. Moreover, ‘Indian ethos’ is features of Indian life, to some extent it is possible to stress a number of facets of it such as the various shades of familial relations, a typical conditioning of Indian mind, sensibility and sensitivity, domestic strains, harmony and familial disintegration, the patriarchal social structure, caste hierarchy and homogeneity, the impact of myth and superstition and socio-cultural and socio-economic life of people governed by age old convention—all this is known as Indian ethos.
Though there has been tremendous and rapid growth of science and technology in every field, most of the people in India still in connected with Indian ethos. The widespread India is a mingle of the extremes of every kind, heir to a rich socio-cultural heritage, often termed as ‘the miniature of the world’ holds a fundamental theme- ‘unity in diversity’. In spite of so many differences, Indians share many things in common- life attitude, value system, religion philosophic strains, patriarchal society, institution of joint family, traditional arranged marriage ceremony, festivals in community and religion. These characteristics help to crystallize Indian ethos in Indian literature.

Patriarchal society is one of the ethoses of Indian culture. In the case of Halfway House, Savitri and Mahendranath take up patriarchal culture and follow it. Therefore, patriarchal culture makes them think that man is a bread-earner and that woman is a house-keeper. In this context, Savitri is more forward than her husband. Savitri has more powerful controlling faculty than her husband. It is contrary to the patriarchal cultural norms of society. Savitri takes up a job and feeds the family while Mahendranath idles away without helping her. This upsets the cultural norms of patriarchy. However, Mahendranath possesses the traits of a man of the patriarchal society as he wants to be manly and refuses to take up housework. But he does not try honestly to find job neither for himself nor for other man in his family. Savitri plays not only the masculine role of earning the bread for the family but also the feminine role of keeping the house well condition. It is noteworthy that Savitri seems to enjoy more freedom than a traditional wife. Here, Mahendranath could neither play his masculine role successfully nor break himself free from problems.

The economic irresponsibility and patriarchal norms have come into a direct conflict in the context of Mahendranath and Savitri. It creates a crisis and disintegration in their family. Being a wife, Savitri feels that her husband should succeed in business and earn every luxury that she dreams of having. Therefore, Savitri says:

**The Woman:** Let me tell you about the reality I know. Why does one get married? In order to fulfil a need…an inner…void, if you like; to be self-sufficient…complete. But that’s not why Mahendra got married! The object of his existence is … as if…he were there only to fill in the gaps in the lives of
Thus, Savitri accepts the patriarchal norm of a manly man and very much wants her husband to be masculine. When Juneja tries to explain to Savitri how she is responsible for Mahendranath’s downfall, she refuses to see reasons. As Savitri’s husband fails to fit her image of a masculine man, she runs after several men but fails to realize her dreams. She blames her husband for her failures and frustrations without realizing her part in it. On the other hand, being husband, Mahendranath fails to understand the feelings of his wife. He does not understand wife’s need for love and recognize her sentiments. Blindly he blames her for his downfall.

Generally in a typical patriarchal family, father plays the role of persecutor and mother, the rescuer in familial crisis between children and parents. When father hurts children, mother rescues them. But the roles also change according to the place. Father rescues mother and children by earning money and arranging things outside the house while they persecute him by being ungrateful for what they are provided and by demanding more things without any consideration for his difficulties. Mother rescues father and children by doing all the housework and striving to satisfy all their needs. But in the context of Mahendranath and Savitri, it is contrary to the patriarchal cultural norms of society. Savitri rescues Mahendranath by taking up a job to feed the family. So, Mahendranath seems frustrated and starts beating his wife inhumanly. Binni explains Juneja how Mahendranath exploits Savitri as:

**The Older Girl:** Uncle! When I lived here it was like being…you can’t imagine what it was like…Daddy’s rages when he tore Mama’s clothes to shreds…when he gagged her and beat her up behind closed doors…dragging her by the hair to the WC…. *(shudders)*

I can’t even recount the fearful scenes I’ve witnessed in this house! If any outsider had seen all this, he would have wondered why they hadn’t …

**The Fourth Man:** What you’re saying is not new to me. Mahendranath told me about it. 27
Savitri is a typical middle-class woman. She wants to marry a man who can help her to up the ladder of socio-economic status. Mahendranath’s frustration is made worse by his harassing nature. Both, Mahendranath and Savitri begin to get dominant role instead of solving their problems together. So they go on conflict in the familial life consequently their children feel alienated in family. That is the reason why the husband is of no count for the wife. The wife, because of the power of being the breadwinner, asserts herself in the routine matter of domestic life and dominant in the familial life.

On the perspectives of traditional concept of Family and relationship of husband and wife, parents and children in familial life seems to be meaningful in Halfway House and strongly relevance to modern life. ‘Burges and Locke’ throw light on the nature of family:

Family is a group of persons united by ties of marriage blood or adoption, constituting a single household; interacting and communicating with each other in respective social roles of husband and wife, mother and father, son and daughter, brother and sister; and creating and maintaining a common culture.  

Halfway House begins with a prologue by a Man in a black suit. It conveys that all men behave alike in a given situation. The play proves this through Savitri, the central character. Mohan Rakesh points out:

This woman is the central character and I want the four men to be played by the same actor. What I want to indicate by that I that it’s not the individual who’s responsible for his situation, for he would have made the same choice no matter what, regardless of the situation. Any choice anyone makes has a certain irony in it, for things turn out the same regardless of the choice.

In Mahendranath’s family in Halfway House, there is not reciprocal coordination among the members of the family. The play is about the disintegration of a family. Each member of this
family is isolated from the others. They have turned against each other, disturbing the healthy atmosphere of the house. The older girl, Binni escapes the moment she finds the opportunity of running away with a sympathetic Manoj. The Boy, Ashok wastes his time in cutting out coloured pictures of film actresses from magazines, waits for his chance to get away. The Younger Girl, Kinni, does not feel attached either to the parents or her brother and sister. She is very disappointed as her small needs remain unattended. She feels neglected.

However, in the modern age, traditional institution of family (Joint family) underwent radical changes in its form and some of different terms such as the nuclear family and the lone-parent family connected to it. Because of the after effects of the economic expansion of industrial cities and metro cities, there was people’s shift from rural to urban settings. It means that the traditional joint families, which consisted of a number of people living together in one household all bound by traditional culture and roles such as grandparent, uncle and aunt, brothers and sisters with their children, were replaced by nuclear family. The nuclear family generally consists of two adult partners (husband and wife) and their dependent children. They live comparatively independently of their relatives and local community. This is the changed scenario in many families of modern India.

Mohan Rakesh, an eminent playwright in Indian English drama in translation, registers his deep insight into the life and reality of cities. The social conditions, hierarchy and harmony, economic barriers, familial relations, customs, traditions, religious practices and the portrait of modern woman with many a multiple aspect have been the most penetrating facets of his writing. Therefore Mohan Rakesh seems as the writer of urban reality and culture.

Traditionally arranged marriage ceremony is one of the features of Indian ethos. In this respect, portrayal of marriage and married life in Halfway House seems to be meaningful and relevant to contemporary life. It portrays some of the subtle ironies related to marriage in the context of modern life. Commenting upon the benefits that result from ‘marriage’, Alexander Walker observes:

‘The advantages resulting from the state of marriage are that
the two sexes may reciprocally satisfy the natural desires which are felt equally by each...that they may equally by respective duties, provide for the children proceeding from their mutual union, that they
may equally assist each other throughout life by reciprocal affection and cares; that they may in old age receive that cares of their common progeny: and that they may, in health and well being, reach that age which all these circumstances generally enable married pairs to attain.\textsuperscript{30}

Alexander Walker goes on to assert that ‘History proves that marriage is essential to the well-being of human society.’\textsuperscript{31} Thus marriage partners are to serve each other, help, teach, and strengthen each other.

Mahendranath and Savitri get married and procreate three children to raise a family. The marriage between Mahendranath and Savitri and the state of the family they have created between themselves felt disappointed relationship. It is the failure of Savitri’s attempts to walk out of her marriage and settle with somebody else that force her to continue with Mahendranath. On the other hand, Mahendranath comes back home because, as Juneja says, he loves Savitri and cannot live without her. But the way Mahendranath treats Savitri, as he beats, teases, abuses her, does not exactly seem to be satisfactory in the family environment. Savitri’s continuous accusations that Mahendranath is a useless person, a complete failure in life, who is not capable of anything-neither earning to support the family, nor willing to take up responsibility of any kind-is one of the factors which affect healthy familial atmosphere badly. Her constant frustration is an unhealthy example for the growing children. Consequently, Ashok grows into an idler who has given up his studies mid-way. Even Savitri’s treatment of Mahendranath and her relations with other men have filled Ashok with rage against his mother.

At another level, traditionally in married life human beings have to strive and adjust for satisfied life but the play show that human beings can never be fully satisfied especially those who desire too much from life partner. Mahendranath, Singhania, Jagmohan and Juneja are four men with different qualities. While making her choice, Savitri chose Mahendranath and married him, but she did not feel satisfied with him. However, if she had selected Jagmohan as her marital partner, things would not have been any different, because she would not have found the qualities of Juneja in Jagmohan and her situation would have remained unchanged. Therefore
Juneja says by using unsympathetic words to Savitri to explain her incomplete desire and extra-marital relationship such as:

**The Woman:** And yet I have spent my life with him!

**The Fourth Man:** But every other year you’ve tried to free yourself by looking around for another man! In the beginning I was one of these men. After me, you were enamoured of Shevjeet…his university degree, his trips abroad, or whatever. Then you met **Jagmohan.** You admired him for his excellent contacts, his smart way of life, his generosity.  

Binni’s married life is completely disappointed. Binni got married and went away but became discontented in her married life. It is very remarkable that she has married the erstwhile lover of her mother, Manoj. As Binni’s husband, Manoj points out; she has brought an infection from her parental home which spoils their marriage. Thus, this marriage has been devoid of love and sacrifice and then there is no limit to the suffering, predicament and the plight of family members. *Halfway House* reflects the miserable condition of married life. It projects how Binni is exploited by the husband. Binni expresses the fear and problems of married life:

**The Older Girl:** What reason? A cup of tea spilt from his hand or a short delay when he returns from work? These little things are not really reasons; they become reasons. A strange sort of feeling mounts up within me and spreads like poison through my whole being. Everything I touch or see or hear becomes distorted and I stand helpless and fearful under the spell of a destructive fate.

Binni wonders at the series of unending mishappenings. She is simply witness to all automatic happening, a series of misfortunes. In such conflicting moments, Binni’s state is like a fish out of water. She leads a luckless life facing and sustaining various jolts of disapproval, restlessness and humiliation. Mohan Rakesh depicts sensitive helplessness in married life without
ornamentation and exaggeration. He maintains simplicity and humble tenderness on one hand and grand reality on the other.

In the marriage ceremony traditionally husband and wife take oath to be loyal to each other in their future life. However in the case of marriage between Savitri and Mahendranath, Savitri could not keep pious relationship in married life. Therefore the essential bond of love vanished from their lives and the home turned into unhealthy atmosphere. Mahendranath loves Savitri intensely. Savitri also must have been in love with him at one time, but after marriage, she has begun to feel disillusioned with Mahendranath because while she has high expectations from life, he is without work and has no source of income. Savitri has turned bitter because, on the one hand, she bears the burden of running the household, on the other; she bears the sharp pang of not being able to achieve anything in life. Her children do not provide any solace to her. She wants to spend the rest of her life with a complete and successful man. But this aspiration of hers is responsible for the disintegration of family and her married life.

Besides, through Halfway House Mohan Rakesh subtly suggests that marriages must be arranged not on the considerations of wealth and status but on the considerations of character and love. It is a fact that Savitri wished her daughter, Binni to be married to someone who had a status and wealth. Savitri had no idea about the likes and dislikes of the girl. On the contrary, Binni had to leave her husband, Manoj, for he thought she has brought an infection from her parental home which spoils their marriage.

Chastity of Indian woman is one of the characteristics of Indian socio-culture. However, Savitri is unlike the traditional Indian woman who continues to bear with the existing situation. She is modern woman who holds her head high to explore all the avenues to improve the conditions her family. In many ways she represents the new emerging woman who does not hesitate to exercise and use all her potentials to improve their economically, emotionally and psychologically rotten conditions. In many ways Savitri is in sharp contrast to the traditional home-loving and home-tied woman having all ingredients and traits of stoicism. However, Savitri too suffers, but her sufferings are the result of her own choice, her inner compulsions and her psychic needs. Her frustration is caused by her failure to fill the psychological desire within her.

Being modern woman, Savitri is highly ambitious, aggressive, has an attractive and provocative figure and it is her dream of a glorious life which strays her into wrong directions.
The fact that the first two years of marriage were satisfactory, what went wrong afterwards? Of course, the great financial tension, but economic compulsions are not shared or discussed with her husband who still loves her in spite of what she keeps extra-marital relationship. Instead of sharing the difficulties with her husband and trying to find some way out, she discards the man to whom she was socially tied. Consequently the husband Mahendranath is unable to think and in order to avoid ugly scenes he slips out of the house and finds some relief with his friend, Juneja.

The tension between Savitri and her children is the outcome of Savitri’s own behavior. Her decisions such as calling her boss at house, establishing telephonic contact with her previous lover, Jagmohan and wishing to live with him and so on are not at all healthy for family. She forgets that now she is the mother of three children who need parental affection, love and grooming. Therefore after the departure of Singhania, there are heated arguments between Savitri and her son, Ashok who raise many questions to which Savitri has no answer. Ashok angrily says:

**The Boy:** I mean exactly what I said. Whoever you’ve invited up to now… Why did you do so?

**The Woman:** Why do you think?

**The Boy:** For the glamour of it all. An intellectual. A man with a salary of five thousand. A Chief Commissioner. Whenever you’ve invited anyone, it hasn’t been for the person himself but…because of his name, his salary, his position.

**The Woman:** If these people come over, you feel small?

**The Boy:** Very, very small. 34

Here, Ashok stops short of directly accusing his mother of her promiscuity, but the words that have come out of his heart speak sound and shake Savitri to think about her nature. Savitri certainly gets a tug for the first time from her son. Ashok has said something which his father could not have said.

Savitri represents ambition of a modern woman. She is very ambitious woman who wants her husband to be a strong man in mind and body, successful in his business, earn a lot of money
for the family and be a glamorous person. Therefore, she complains that Mahandranath has no personality or strength of character or self-confidence. Consequently, she continues in search of complete man to fill in the gaps and her desires. She tries to seek a complete man in her lovers. But even there, she has not been able to have a lasting relationship because of the uncertainties and responsibilities of middle-class life. She has a bit of the Lady Macbeth’s ambition in her and she goes on searching for perfect matrimonial happiness, but gets frustrated at every step. She is not able to solve the problem of her life by accepting the adjustment with modern life with a sense of logic.

Another feature of Savitri’s personality is not willing to accept her failure to keep extra-marital affairs. Even her husband seems helpless in dealing with his wife’s extra-marital relationship. He only dislikes his wife’s lovers. He does not have the courage to oppose them openly nor the generosity to ignore them. On the contrary, he talks only ironically about them and raises self-pity. Similarly he has neither the patience to stay with the family nor does he try to go away from there. When Mahenadranath goes away from the house in a fit of anger and stays with Juneja, he comes back again to his house because he says that he loves his wife in spite of temperamental clashes.

3.1.5 Dramatic techniques and Language of Halfway House:

Mohan Rakesh uses unique dramatic devices such as ‘The Prologue’, ‘One man playing five different roles’, ‘Repetition and omission of language’, and so on. Let us discuss them.

The Prologue is a new idea in the technique of play-writing. It is equally controversial as critics are both for and against it. The code of playwriting does not permit the writer to address the audience directly. The Man in Black Suit is actually the writer himself. Part of the speech of the Man in Black Suit is not sustained by the later development of the play; so it becomes contradictory in itself. Yet it has its own purpose. It prepares the audience mentally to receive the play. It also partially hints at the type and purpose of the play onwards the audience is going to witness. The Prologue appears to be a modern version of the Sutradhar of Sanskrit drama.
The first male character, who is not really a participant in the action of the play but performs a special introduction to the play, is the speaker of the Prologue. The Prologue is very symbolic and it attempts to set up contraries by highlighting the concept of definite versus indefinite. Paradoxically, he says:

**The Man In a Black Suit:** (pensively flicking ash from his cigar) Once again, the same thing all over again…(stands up, as if to meet a challenge). I do not know, who you think I am, nor what you suppose I am about to say. Perhaps you think I have a well-defined function in this play-as actor, director, stage manager or something else. But you would be wrong—for, I am amorphous. And this play is as undefined as I am.  

Here, the speaker suggests disappointment with the recurrent cycle of events in life. In other words, the normal circumstances of life seem to be stifling and stationary to him. In order to free himself of this state, he takes in an indefinite or amorphous state of things. He even introduces an element of suspense regarding his exact role in the play. In fact, he declares that he has no definite role to play. The implications of ‘amorphous’ are – the speaker’s perception that he is ‘undefined’, he suggests that he does not want a single conventional identity. In the context of play, in the form of the five men who come into Savitri’s life projects same thing all over again. In other words, the Man in Black Suit’s capability to exchange places with any other male character, represents a selfish sameness about and a worthless individuality in Savitri’s life. It conveys that all men behave alike in a given situation.

One man playing five different roles is a unique dramatic device introduced by Mohan Rakesh in his modern play, Halfway House. Rajinder Nath, ex-director, Shri Ram Centre for Art and Culture, New Delhi, aptly writes on this device as:

Through a brilliant theatrical device Rakesh makes another very significant point which would not have been possible if he had
treated it strictly as a realistic play. The actor who speaks the Prologue also plays four different roles including that of the husband.\textsuperscript{36}

Some of the critics have termed this device a gimmick. Some others have long-jumped miles in one go and have placed the play in the absurdist tradition. The present researcher thinks that it is not a gimmick for more than one reason but a very powerful theatrical device which is fully integrated with its thematic concerns. About this, more shall be discussed. First let me dispose of the absurdist path. Just because a playwright uses a non-realistic dramatic device, it does not automatically place the play in the absurdist tradition. In fact, it will be unjust to do so. Drama of the Absurd carries within it a whole lot of well-defined philosophical concerns.

The point which the playwright makes through this device is to show how conveniently and according to one’s convenience the same man can put on different masks according to the situation in which he is placed. May be this will not satisfy the old-fashioned theorist fed on Aristotle and Bradley because it destroys the whole concept of ‘character’; but then, what is more important: a concept, or truth? This is a vital truth which certainly springs out of the hollow social milieu with which the playwright is concerned: on deep reflection it may apply to all human beings.\textsuperscript{37}

However, the modern Indian playwright has attempted to liberate drama from heavy symbolism, use of masks and other conventional theatrical devices. It seems that for Mohan Rakesh, the struggles of the common man have become a recurrent theme in his play, therefore he left device of using masks and uses the same actor for the five male characters.

‘One man playing five different roles’ is not only a powerful theatrical device but also a very significant thematic input. Rajinder Nath aptly comments:
The only other playwright who has employed this device is Badal Sircar. In his play, *Pagla ghoda* one actress is to play four different women. In this play too the device is used not as a gimmick but is an absolutely essential thematic input.\(^{38}\)

The device, ‘One man playing five different roles’ implies that the emphasis is on the human situation which has been projected through a set of human beings and not so much on those human agents themselves. Therefore, each individual does not want a single conventional identity but each individual behaves alike in a given situation.

The language of Halfway House is marvelous from the point of view of the theatre. The success of the performance of the play owes much to the kind of the language used. It is noteworthy that Mohan Rakesh used appropriate words in the context of character’s situation. The language of Halfway House is plain and simple, quite fitting for the members of a middle-class family, but at the same time it is powerful enough to convey the tension, the mental disturbance and irritation of the characters. Simple words have been imbued with connotative meanings and implications of the context.

Repetition and omission of words project the hidden restlessness and pain of the characters. The unspoken conveys more than the spoken. For instance, when Binni wants to know something from her father but Mahendranath does not want to speak directly to daughter as:

**The Older Girl:** What’s the matter, Daddy?

**The First Man:** Matter? Nothing.

**The Older Girl:** There is something.

**The First Man:** It’s nothing. Your mother was just saying…

**The Older Girl:** What was she saying?

**The First Man:** Nothing…actually…I was just saying…\(^{39}\)
Thus, on the part of Mahendranath who uses hesitation and pauses to express his unwillingness to say something directly to daughter. Also, The symbolic use of words in particular critical situation is one of the qualities of Mohan Rakesh’s dramatic art. In the opening scene, the stage-properties are described as-‘a disorderly living room in what was once a fairly well-to-do middle-class home, several pieces of broken furniture-sofa set, dining table, cupboard, dressing-table etc. These words represent home which lost proper function and this language obviously projects an insight into the state of affairs, the position of the characters and totally worn out but lingering on somehow in the house. Rajinder Nath, ex-director, Shri Ram Centre for Art and Culture, New Delhi, aptly writes on ‘diction/language’:

Another remarkable achievement of Rakesh in this play is its diction/language. It is so simple, so colloquial and yet intensely dramatic. Rakesh had a compulsive habit of revising a draft a number of times. And it was not a simple revision of this page or that page but the revision started form page no. 1 and went up to the last page and that too umpteen times. It might not be out of place to mention here that his subject for Nehru Fellowship Project was: The Dramatic Word.40
3.2 Introduction: The Great Swans of the Waves:

Rakesh’s The Great Swans of the Waves related to the past event exposes the agitation and dilemma of contemporary man and simultaneously it deals with the relationships in the familial backdrop. Even it is discussed that sophisticated (modern and material context) life and sacred consolation are contrasted with the fundamental quarrel of a modern man who is confused between these two sights of life and obliged to prefer one. Mohan Rakesh projects main plot mix with sub-plot in this play. The main plot weaves the events of familial life related to Nand, Sundari and Alka and the sub-plot projects the philosophy and teaching of Buddhism of Buddha. In this context Mohan Rakesh notes:

In the opening, maybe it was from understanding Ashvaghosh’s Saundaranand that this picture took form in my brain.

Nevertheless, Mohan Rakesh associates the thematic inside to the sub-plot in this play projecting a wonderful synthesis of the regular struggle and anxiety between spiritualism of Buddhism and modern material pleasure with the beauty of Sundari. Buddha following extensive break comes in the town and people like to observe him and to obtain Diksha from his spiritual thinking. Even Yashodhara is eager to accept Buddhism and his thought and philosophy at this moment. Yet Nand also starts to think about his philosophy and great thoughts. However he is being trapped between the two contradictory poles of appeal. On the other hand Nand’s wife Sundari is not ready to accept such critical situation. Therefore she arranges Kamotsav (Love-feast) to join the group in dance, food and drink. Nand unwillingly joins her love-feast although visitors do not come over there. On the other hand, Nand sees Gautam Buddha in his spiritual dress with calm nature. But Nand is not completely prepared to accept thoughts of Buddhism so he has inner conflict. Nand’s soliloquy projects that he is in huge confusion. He immediately leaves fort to search for respond of his query.

As a result, Rakesh exposes the dominance of spiritualism in the main theme as well as in sub theme of this play. Lord Buddha reflects individuality of holiness related to Buddhism. On the other hand, Nand presents himself as the modern man who is trapped between materialist and non-materialist principles. As a modern woman Sundari strives to obtain a just right companion
in Nand. In additional, Sundari desires to achieve a whole man who has rational brain and physically powerful.

Rakesh presents traditional religious principles of Buddhism vs. materialist views of life in context of modern era. The synthesis of the conventional cultural thoughts and modern essentials comes to an exclusive theatrical result in *The Great Swans of the Waves*. In this sagacity, playwright just does not replicate a past event other than exposes a innovative setting and brings it in modern contact. In this relation S. Sawhney remarks:

> Certainly Rakesh is not alone among modern Indian dramatists in turning to earlier narratives. Beginning with Jaishankar Prasad’s *Skandagupta*, including Jagdish Chandra Mathur’s *Konark*, Karnad’s *Tughlaq*, Dharmavir Bharati’s *Andha Yuga*, and, of course Mohan Rakesh’s two plays, *Lahron ke Rajhans, Asarh ka ek din*, are historical.  

Here, it is awfully crucial to recognize the concept of family in Indian context in general and in particular context of the play, *The Great Swans of the Waves*.

### 3.2.1 ‘Family’ in *The Great Swans of the Waves*:

“The word ‘family’ derives from the Latin ‘familia’ notes domestic.” This domestic word is related with one such a family where husband and wife lives together also with their children. David M. Newman defines ‘family’ as:

A family consists of two or more persons, including the householder, who are related by birth, marriage, or adoption, and who live together as one household.

Nevertheless, the family is such a broad term which consists of web of relationship in particular one home. This web of relationship develops in various level such as husband-wife, father-mother, father-children, mother-children, brother-sister and sister-mother and so on. It is this one family group develops in one culturally united social group with one kind of
conventional traditional principles. Sociologist, Rama Mehta, sociologist speaks on the plight of woman in family:

There is a recorded evidence to show that the Hindu woman was not always without rights nor constantly in subjection. There is, however, greater evidence to show that the contrary was true; for many centuries her position continued to be one in which she did not have either legal or social rights to make her independent of the family into which she was born or married.  

Still, family is the fundamental part in social life not only from an ancient to modern age. On the surface level there are many changes occur in society so in familial structure also. There is much development as concerned with social status and sophisticated life style in the modern age. There is an industrialization and town growth. In this relation, Mohan Rakesh presents the clash between Nand and Sundari as between the modern material values and the religious traditional values. For instance at the outset Nand is projected as a in love with Sundari and dedicated companion. On the other hand when he meets Yashodhara earlier than coming fort of Sundari and gets confusion and as a result he trapped himself, contrasts with Sundari’s force and willpower. Consequently Nand expresses bewilderment:

Nand: Maybe another kind of madness is in me. It sits like a coiled snake on the consciousness, making it impossible for me to escape from myself. I wish to be rid of it… and yet, do I really wish it? Why is there no finality about the will? 

Accordingly, continual commotion in husband-wife association looks lack of love, hence Sundari asks Nand to go and meet Gautama since she does not like that Nand is in confusion state of mind. However Nand’s hard work indicates that he does not easily come out of his puzzlement. It is observed that without his will Nand allows his head to be bald and discards the pleading sink presented by Buddha. Instead of visiting house, he goes in the forest. He encounters with a tiger to commit suicide however when he observes himself murder by the tiger in an unaware aspiration to show his maleness. Anand who is Bhikshu like a shade in the sense
of true follower of Buddha came house with him, however on one time in house Nand be able to only mock Anand and turn him away, in conclusion he comes to meet Sundari. But Sundari could not recognize Nand because his head was shaved. At the closing stage Nand departs for the reason that Sundari’s fails to love him. Additional, Rakesh exposes that Sundari’s breakdown because she is the representative modest wife; she is more paying attention in her individual desire as more important than the wellbeing of her relations.

3.2.2 Sundari’s relationship with husband:

Sundari breaks the principles of the patriarchal Indian the social order where wife is starved of the liberty and to do something as her will power. Wife is believed as husband’s responsibility. She is measured as under control of husband. Nevertheless, the role of wife in modern Indian society has been altering with changing time. In this context, the main protagonist in this play Sundari is confident, authoritarian and courageous as compare to her husband. She is not obedient. She is not accountable about her relationships and her bold nature. She is not willing to obey as directed by her husband. She likes to do as according her will and even she has her own principles in her behaviour. She is bold enough to call her friends for love-feast however when she knew that a number of friends are not participating her party she expresses her agony without realizing she is a mere lady in Indian society. She bravely says:

**Sundari:** Can I postpone today’s desire to tomorrow? My desire is desire of my inner self. And it can be fulfilled by myself. For which circumstances are not as important as some people think. 47

For this reason, Sundari breaks the conventional rules of the Indian society. In the path of violation she exposes her feeling plainly devoid of some sensation of culpability. According to culture of Indian society visitors are renowned as Gods but she looses her temper and utters unkind language for visitors. She boldly scolds:

**Sundari:** I’m the cause of my own disturbance. I do not give anyone else the right to be the cause of my disturbance. If Lord Maitreya wishes to leave, please let him do so and ask him to once again visit all those houses he has already visited and tell the people concerned that they
needn’t expect to come to my house on any tomorrow. As far as they are concerned, there will be no tomorrow. 48

Here the dramatist, Rakesh exposes vices related to modern society where women are behaving according to their will and break traditional Indian conventional rules which are good for welfare for human being and society. Sundari belongs to rich class and she possesses one kind of pride. For instance Sundari has some kind of presuppositions as being she is very proud of her beauty of her body. In this context she expresses:

Sundari: Prince Siddhartha has become Gautam Buddha today.

The credit for it goes to Lady Yashodhara

Alka: The credit for it?

Sundari: Yes. If Lady Yashodhara could have bound Prince Siddhartha with her charms, wouldn’t he have remained Prince Siddhartha today? 49

Here, Rakesh projects a powerful individuality catastrophe of the main protagonist; Sundari who is a receptive lady only looks towards her joy in wedded life. Sundari’s dilemma is related with such critical situation where materialism and traditional cultural rules are contrasted in front of her. It is observed that she has psychological trouble that being outside as consequential from discontented desires. She desires to have love of her companion but at the conclusion her desire becomes only imagination is air. What is important to note that her husband lacks her desires? It is no doubt that Nand is unaware about this circumstance in familial life because he has his confusion related with his existence of life. Consequently, Nand and Sundari stand for dual oppositions. Nand seems to observe conventional rules of Indian society, while Sundari is oversensitive, exciting and domineering individuality.

It is observed that there is root cause of crisis in husband-wife relationship is that they are trapped in such a critical situation where tradition versus modernity are compelled them to choose one of options as their choice. In reality Nand’s desire and his will is likely to follow Indian tradition as reflected by, Siddhartha. Actions in Nand’s life occurs in such critical manner that he becomes very conscious to think about the principles and philosophy of Siddharth, on the
other hand Sundari becomes very restless and doubts that whether Nand really will accept Buddhism from his bottom of his heart. While Nand accepts as a kind role of monk and really does not hesitate to follow the path of Buddhism, he projects the splendor of the religious thoughts although on the other hand he experiences very serious moments such as separation, defeat of individuality and collapse of his association with his companion. Consequently primarily Nand was puzzled between his inner penchant to conserve or sustain long-established religious ethics of Buddha’s principles which are sources of his pleasure and individuality. Subsequently Nand says:

**Nand:** But my question is, if there is no difference between being and non-being, why cut my hair? Now that it’s cut, what difference does it make? Will it not grow again in a few days? There would be a difference if my heart is changed, my eyes are changed. In my heart there’s still the same love for you. In my eyes you’re still beautiful.  

On the other hand Nand’s wife, Sundari is very courageous enough to say that it is the flaw of Yashodhara that she is not capable to attract Siddhartha therefore he leaves his wedding life and went in the forest. Even she is very brave enough to say:

**Sundari:** That the attraction of a woman makes a man masculine, while her repulsion makes him Gautam Buddha.  

In this background, Sundari’s hatred of Yashodhara is somewhat aggravated by envy. More drastically, she is awfully pompous of woman’s attractiveness. In this intelligence, Rakesh does not away from predictable judgments of the womanly world, and by this reason this theme is related with modern appeal.

Sundari is completely in opposition to the repression of inner wishes and terms like male dominance, rules of patriarchal society. In this sense Mohan Rakesh projects his woman protagonist more vigorous and dominating than her companion. His woman protagonist is gorgeous, intelligent, dynamic, and more leading than male character. By this way, Mohan Rakesh projects representation of modern lady who is trapped between two thoughts, one is her search for perfection and on the other hand her equal human rights in the modern society.
3.2.3 Nand’s dichotomy as modern man:

Nand is the vital personality as concerned with the themes of this play. The initial act is related with Sundari where Nand is just attracted by her fascination and follows as a modern husband. The next act exposes Nand’s internal conflict. However, in this act the projection is very surface level and mildly presented that how Nand and Sundari are trapped between their will power and thoughts of spirituality. At the end this clash leads them to depart and traditional religious principle more dominant than thoughts of materialistic views of life in the relevance with modern context.

It is observed that initial stage Nand is very interested to deal with marital relationship with Sundari therefore he is in Sundari’s dressing room, at that moment Alka informs that Lord Buddha had approached for alms. However Nand is not very conscious about Buddha’s existnace at his door. But when he realized that he is guilty one, he becomes nervous and wants to ask for pardon. It is observed that Mohand Rakesh presents such critical situation with symbolic way when Nand hears pledge of Buddhism at that moment he engages to hold a mirror for his companion and abruptly the mirror breaks down on the ground. This reflects Nand’s unbalanced intelligence.

In this way Nand wants to beg pardon and wants to meet Buddha. So he went and returns with fruitless manner. Nand is not happy one at this stage. There is no significant discourse between Nand and Sundari. It is observed because Nand has dilemma and even he says:

\textbf{Nand:} You too feel I am another person? Just because someone forcibly cut my hair? Disfiguring me a little in the process? But does one become a different person for it?\textsuperscript{52}

It is observed only because when Nand retured with his shaved head and thought of Buddhism though he is confused state of mind and at the same moment Sundari does not recognize him even she is frightened to see her husband in this state of condition. On the other hand Nand fails to understand this condition and his self-image is wounded. In the closing stage Nand leaves house. Sundari is annoyed not since Nand’s acceptance of Buddhism, but as she thinks her confidence is vanished.
Nand could not understand what was happened with him and his life. He recognizes:

**Nand:** Why I engaged with the tiger that came snarling up? Why I invited my own death or why I fought so hard for my own survival? I coexisted with the instincts of self-destruction and self-preservation then-how and why? Was the simply a need for gratification that impelled me to live? Or was it merely a mental conflict-assuming a belief without a belief? 53

As a result, Nand’s expressions reveal as a circumstances having intense mental stress where he is trapped between a wish to have wife’s closeness and a dreadful to know that she does not realize him as a husband. Here it is the reality that Nand comes in Bhikshu’s form with his head shaved so he observes himself completely powerless and lonesome. Therefore he expresses his agony:

**Nand:** I don’t wish to hear further about the Wayfarer’s commands, mendicant. By his command you shaved my head. Out of respect for my brother I did not stop you by force. I was hoping the look in my eyes would let him know what I thought of that undesirable initiation. But knowingly he did not wish to know. 54

Thus, Nand’s expressions project his poor and mocking criticism on his part. And he is so helpless to choose between two paths one is wedded life and other is religious life. At the end Nand departs from his home and wants to know his true identity in this matrial world. So, he expresses his anguish:

**Nand:** He cut my hair. But has that made my appearance more true? Would it be truer if the tongue is cut off or the limbs are cut off? And yet who can say who is more deluded-he or I? he had said,’ I am not I, you are not you, he is not he, but everything is a picture an invisible finger has made in the sky, which as soon as made is obliterated, that it makes no
difference whether it was made or not, whether it has been. But my question is, if there is no difference between being and not-being, why cut my hair?  

Therefore, Nand raises a number of inner conflicts with his anger tone and hence it is observed that he is confused state of mind with dichotomy as modern man.

### 3.2.4 Indian Religious Tradition: Buddhism:

India is recognized as the fertile soil of religions and attitudes with many moral theories for wellbeing of human being. Even India introduces Buddhism. *Pancha Shila* is five moral precepts in Buddhism. It is supposed that it is the responsibility of human being to care for the well-being of all birds and nature. It is very important to note that the result of the strict observance of this precept is the spirit of tolerance even it is one of the features of Buddhism. It is obviously noted in Dhammika Sutta that a man should not break the wife of another nor even concubine but he leads a life of chastity. In this context Dharma prohibits all illegal sexual relations. According to the bottom thoughts of religions related to husband-wife relations, the choice of a wife or of a husband is determined so much by cultural conventions and material interests that neither health nor beauty nor intellect nor heart is considered to be of any value. Here is is significant to noteworthy that the aim of human being is not to accumulate the wealth or the satisfaction of natural inclinations but is is the moral duty of human being to attain that perfection which consists in perfect wisdom, perfect charity and perfect freedom. Such kind of principles are also presented in Hinduism, for instance, it is the ‘Moksha’ means to attain perfection on this earth which is related to term, Purshartha. In other words, the best moral principles which lead to happy life are clearly mentioned and asked to follow them by human being in every religion. Traditional values are based predominantly on moral theory which impelling forces leading mankind upward.

Tradition in Buddhism is such a broad term related with the noble eightfold path which is mentioned by Gautam Budda. By observing these paths in life human being leads to insight, to peace, to nirvana. These eight fold path- Right belief, Right aspiration, Right speech, Right action, Right living, Right effort, Right thought and Right tranquillity. Rakesh exposes a
significance role of *Pancha Shila* in this play to expose the irritation of contemporary life. He presents values of Buddhism from beginning to end with the thoughts of Anand and Nand. Nand has one more implication concerning internal clash due to the disobedience of *Pancha Shila*. In this background Nand is bold sufficient while he expressing that:

**Nand:** Not just escaped. It’s not so much physical weariness as mental. The fact that the deer was not wounded by my arrow did not hurt my mind so much as seeing him, when I was returning tired and dispirited, lying dead a little distance down the road.

**Sundari:** Was it wounded by someone else’s arrow?

**Nand:** No, not wounded by anyone’s arrow. He died of sheer weariness. I have no mental reactions when I see a deer struck down by an arrow.

If I have any reaction, it’s simply a mild feeling of achievement.  

It is observed that here Nand becomes miserable to think that his futile achievement by revealing how he killed deer. In this sense he realizes initial ethical principle in *Pancha Shila*, means to keep away from killing. In this background, Christopher S. Queen aptly writes:

The ethics of discipline entails the avoidance of conduct that arises from the mental impurities of hatred, greed, and delusion…the pledge to observe the *pancha shila, or pansil*, is perhaps the most universal expression of Buddhist identity.  

Also Moahan Rakesh projects singing group who sing pledge of Buddhism in the background level while presenting some of the ciritical situation related with Buddhism.  

On the other hand, Mohand Rakesh projects Sundari as a new and modern female who breaks the traditional rules of patriarchal society. She does not to hesitate to invite friend on love-feast. She wants to make happy with foodstuff, wine, and song. She desires to present material belongings to Nand for pleasure. Sundari asks:**Sundari:** Drink some more wine..  

Even, Sundari aptly describes herself as:
Sundari: Do you know what people say?

Nand: What do they say?

Sundari: They say you’ve married a witch who always keeps you on your toes with her magic.

Nand: Isn’t it true?

Sundari: Is it? 61

To sum up, this chapter examines Mohan Rakesh’s plays under study in the context of Indian traditional ethos and impact of modernity. Rakesh registers his deep insight into the life and reality of cities. Rakesh presents Mahendranath’s family as a modern type family in ‘Halfway House’. It is a nuclear family which has been broken with the Indian tradition of joint family. It is also a family where the traditional gender roles are changed. Consequently the present researcher thinks that Rakesh poses urban reality and culture where the family turns from the patriarchal to the matriarchal system. Rakesh portrays some subtle ironies related to marriage directly. Traditionally in married life human beings have to strive and adjust for smooth and steady life but Rakesh presents condition of modern life where human beings can never be fully satisfied especially those who desire too much from life partner. Savitri seems to ignore long-lasting relationship between happily wedded husband and wife in our Indian ethos. Besides, Mohan Rakesh subtly suggests through his Halfway House that marriages must be arranged not on the considerations of character and love. It is a fact that Savitri wished her daughter, Binni to be married to someone who had a status and wealth. Savitri had no idea about the likes and dislikes of her daughter.

Rakesh projects Savitri as modern woman who is highly ambitious, aggressive and has an attractive and provocative figure and it is her unrealistic dream of a glorious life which takes her to wrong directions. Rakesh’s play *The Great Swans of the Waves* based on the distant historical past explores the restlessness and predicament of modern man. This play deals with the historical story of Nand, Sundari and Alka and the sub-plot deals with the story of Buddha, Yashodhara and Bhikshu, Anand. Rakesh presents the greatness of Indian tradition and spiritualism. On the contrary Nand’s behaviour symbolizes the basic conflict between people representing materialism and spiritualism. Rakesh presents to us Sundari a female character that is shown as
protesting against the male dominated society. Mohan Rakesh’s support of the age old philosophy of *Panchsheel*, that is the five valuable precepts is evident through the projection of Bhikshu Anand and Yashodhara.

In a nutshell, this chapter gives to us a glimpse into traditional Indian ethos of which we Indian are proud. At the same time Rakesh introduces his readers/audience the modernist way of living life in India.

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