Q)What do you mean by procedural democracy? Discuss the salient features of procedural democracy.

Ans: Procedural democracy is a term used to denote the particular procedures,such as regular elections based on universal suffrage ,that produce an electorally-legitimated government.This is also at times referred to as ‘working democracy.’It basically means the set up of democracy where people have less authority in choosing their representatives than in traditional liberal democracy.It can be said as mere representation of following the procedure of democracy.It is a democracy in which the voters choose to elect representatives in free elections.Election is considered as the central procedure of democracy to choose government.For proceduralist any truth can only be determined as a result of some procedures.

The term procedure imlies action,course,operation or modus operandi.It emphasizes a routine ,strategy or a game plan.Procedural democracy means,”Procedure of electing the representative through universal adult franchise to take public decisions and remove them after particular period of time (if need be).

***Exponents:***

Procedural democracy was formulated by Joseph Schumpeter,and other political scientists like Sartori,Robert Dahl etc.

Definitions of Procedural democracy:

According to Robert Dahl,”Procedural Democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders.”

Schumpeter defines procedural democracy as ,’’ Free competition for a free vote.’’

***Tenets of procedural democracy:***

*1) Procedural participation: People should have the opportunity to elect the government by accepting or refusing the candidates. This gap is filled by electoral process.*

*2) Political contestation: Participation of people should not only be restricted to the ‘ability to select once in 4-5 years’.People should also show political contestation by showing free signals of protest and distrust for the government****.***

***Features of Procedural Democracy:***

1) **Free and fair elections**:Procedural democracy is based on certain procedures like free and fair election,election of representatives etc. It assumes that a fair electoral process is the core of democracy.Therefore all procedures of election,as established by law,should be followed by the government.It is not concerned about whether the system is democratic in true sense or not.

2)**Universal suffrage**: Universal suffrage or universal franchise implies the right of all adult citizens to vote without any discrimination of caste,creed,gender,colour,race,educational qualification etc. It is based upon the idea of ‘’one person,one vote’’ giving political equality. It indicates that the right to participate in the voting process should be available to all the adult citizens of the country.

3) **Consitutional and legal framework**:Procedural aspect of democracy is based on constitutional and legal framework which is easiest part of the exercise.There are many things which are included in the Constitution to provide basis of governance. Laws are also made by the government with a view to implement them.

4**) Neutrality or procedural fairness**: Principle of neutrality in procedural democracy implies that the state and government should provide a neutral framework of rights .The citizens should be free to choose their own values and ends.The government should work for the welfare of citizens. Procedural fairness requires that the government should be totally secular. It should not be partial,recognize and respect the beliefs or practices of all groups in a society.

5**) Continuing responsiveness of the government** : The government officials are responsible to ensure procedural effectiveness.They are responsible to take care of the procedures.Responsiveness is an obligation to carry forward an assigned task to a successful conclusion,according to procedures set by law of the land. It emphasizes the procedures that enable the people to govern or how decisions are made.