

DEFINITION OF SIKH BY P&H HIGH COURT [Dated : 20-06-2009]

The Punjab and Haryana High Court upheld that unshorn hair was an essential component of the Sikh religion. Giving this ruling, full bench of the court comprising Justice J S Khehar, Justice Jasbir Singh and Justice Ajay Kumar Mittal dismissed the writ petition of Ms Gurleen Kaur and others, whereby the constitutional validity of the definition of Sikh contained in the Sikh Gurdwara Act, 1925 had been challenged.

The petitioners had been denied admission into MBBS course at Shiromani Gurdwara Prabandhak Committee controlled Sri Guru Ram Dass Institute of Medical Education and Research, Amritsar, under the quota of seats reserved for the Sikhs, on the ground that since they plucked eyebrows or trimmed beards they were not adhering to sikh tenets essential for the followers of the religion. The bench ruled that an institution denying benefit to those who did not adhere to unshorn hair essential to a Sikh, was within its right to do so.