



CHALLENGES FOR STUDENT-ATHLETES IN HIGHER EDUCATION IN JAMIA MILLIA ISLAMIA

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ABSTRACT:

Student-athletes in higher education contribute significantly to holistic development but often encounter academic, social, and institutional challenges. This study examines the prospects and challenges of student-athletes at Jamia Millia Islamia, a Central University in India. Using a descriptive survey method, data were collected from 163 student-athletes across various sports disciplines through a structured questionnaire. The study explores demographic profiles, academic conditions, institutional support, social experiences, and career prospects. Findings indicate that while student-athletes display strong leadership skills, high competitive participation, and positive perceptions of career skills gained through sports, they experience considerable academic stress, time-management difficulties, health concerns, and social isolation. Limited coordination between academic departments and sports authorities further exacerbates academic-athletic conflicts. Although institutional provisions such as sports quotas exist, the lack of flexible academic policies and structured support restricts dual-career development. The study underscores the need for curriculum flexibility, academic support, teacher sensitization, and coordinated institutional strategies to improve student-athletes' academic success and well-being.

KEYWORDS:

STUDENT-ATHLETES, HIGHER EDUCATION, ACADEMIC CHALLENGES, SPORTS PARTICIPATION, INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions increasingly view sports as integral to holistic student development, promoting leadership, discipline, and social skills alongside academics. However, student-athletes must balance dual commitments that often result in academic pressure and psychological stress (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). In India, sports participation is supported through admission quotas and inter-university competitions, but structured academic support for athletes remains limited (AISHE, 2019). Studies show that student-athletes face challenges in maintaining academic performance, managing time, and meeting faculty expectations due to demanding training schedules (Singh & Mishra, 2015). As a Central University with a strong sporting culture, Jamia Millia Islamia offers a relevant context to examine these issues. Understanding student-athletes' prospects and challenges is crucial for developing inclusive policies that support dual-career pathways (Wylleman & Lavalée, 2004).

1.1 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Previous studies highlight the complex academic and social experiences of student-athletes in higher education. Adler and Adler (1991) reported role conflict arising from competing academic and athletic demands, often leading to

identity strain. Pascarella et al. (1999) observed mixed academic outcomes, emphasizing the critical role of institutional support. Faculty attitudes significantly influence engagement, as positive perceptions enhance motivation while negative labeling hinders performance (Comeaux & Harrison, 2011). Wylleman and Lavalée (2004) stressed the importance of structured dual-career models for long-term development, while Simons, Van Rheenen, and Covington (1999) noted difficulties in academic identity formation due to overemphasis on athletic roles. In India, limited academic flexibility and rigid evaluation systems remain key barriers (Singh & Mishra, 2015). Aquilina (2013) emphasized the need for strong policy frameworks to balance sport and education. While sports participation promotes leadership and teamwork (Gayles & Hu, 2009), student-athletes continue to face time-management and health challenges (Raj & Devi, 2017). Coakley (2015) concluded that effective institutional coordination is essential for reducing stress and enhancing student-athletes' well-being.

1.2 OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

To identify the challenges for student-athletes in higher education.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The present study is descriptive in nature. The data was collected through developed questionnaire from 163 respondents of Jamia Millia Islamia studied in Higher Education.

1.4 RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The data was analysis quantitatively through tabulation of collected data and applied percentage method into the following manners.

1.4.1 PROFILE OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES

The demographic profile of the 163 student-athletes in Jamia Millia Islamia, A Central University (JMI) is presented in Table 1.1.

1.1 PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS-ATHLETES IN JMI

S.No.	Gender	N (%)	Urban	Rural	Age-group
1.	Males	140(85.89)	37(26.43)	103(73.57)	18-25
2.	Females	23(14.11)	8(34.78)	15(65.22)	18-25
Total		163(100)	45(27.60)	118(72.70)	18-25

Table 1.1 present the demographic structure of the student-athlete group is highly skewed toward male participation. Males constitute (85.89 percent) of the sample, while females represent only (14.11 percent). This disproportion suggests a gender imbalance in sports participation at the higher education level. Such a pattern may reflect sociocultural expectations, unequal access to training facilities, or limited encouragement for female participation in certain sports domains.

A clear urban-rural divide is also visible. Among males, (73.57 percent) come from rural areas, whereas (26.43) belong to urban backgrounds. Female athletes also show a rural majority (65.22 percent). This indicates that rural regions contribute significantly to producing competitive student-athletes, contradicting the commonly held perception that structured sports opportunities are more urban-centric. It may also suggest that rural youth rely more heavily on sports for upward mobility.

The age distribution is uniform (18–25 years), which is typical of higher education institutions; however, the exclusive presence of this age range implies that the study covers only the most active performance bracket and excludes older or non-traditional learners.

1.4.2 SPORTS PROFILE OF THE STUDENT-ATHLETES

The sports profile of the student-athletes is shown in Table 1.2, 1.3, 1.4 and 1.5.

TABLE 1.2: SPORTS PROFILE OF THE STUDENTS-ATHLETES

S.No.	Participating in Sports during Higher Education	N(%)
1.	Yes	163 (100)
2.	No	0

Table 1.2 demonstrated that all participating student-athletes (100 percent) have engaged in sports during their higher-education period. There is no representation of non-participants.

TABLE 1.3: PARTICIPATION OF STUDENTS-ATHLETES IN SPORTS

S.No.	Sports Name	N	(%)
1.	Cricket	37	22.70
2.	Basketball	31	19.02
3.	Athletics	21	12.88
4.	Football	16	9.82
5.	Volleyball	15	9.20
6.	Hockey	18	11.04
7.	Badminton	8	4.91
8.	Lawn Tennis	7	4.29
9.	Archery	5	3.07
10.	Shooting	5	3.07

The data in Table 1.3 show varied sports engagement among students. Cricket (22.70 percent) and basketball (19.02 percent) dominate participation, indicating high interest and institutional support for team sports. Athletics (12.88 percent), hockey (11.04 percent), football (9.82 percent), and volleyball (9.20 percent) comprise the next tier of involvement, reflecting balanced participation across popular competitive sports.

Less participation is observed in badminton (4.91 percent), lawn tennis (4.29 percent), archery (3.07 percent), and shooting (3.07 percent). These sports typically require specialized equipment and infrastructure, which may explain lower involvement levels.

TABLE 1.4: TEAM REPRESENTATION IN SPORTS

S.No.	Representation in Sports	N	(%)
1.	Captain	44	26.99
2.	Vice-Captain	65	39.88
3.	Team Members	54	33.33

Table 1.4 shows a significant share of student-athletes have held leadership positions followed by (26.99 percent) Captains and (39.88 percent) Vice-Captains. Only (33.33 percent) team members have never held a leadership role.

TABLE 1.5: HIGHEST LEVEL OF SPORTS PARTICIPATION

S.No.	Level of Sports participation	N	(%)
1.	District	163	100.00
2.	State	150	92.02

3.	National	70	42.94
4.	International	11	6.75
5.	North Zone Inter-University	158	96.93
6.	All India Inter-University	65	39.88

Table 1.5 presents participation is highest at the district (100 percent) and North Zone Inter-University (96.93 percent) levels, indicating universal engagement in foundational competitive events. State-level participation is also high (92.02 percent), revealing broad athletic competence.

However, national-level involvement drops to (42.94 percent), and international participation is only (6.75 percent). Representation in All India Inter-University events stands at (39.88 percent).

1.4.3 ACADEMIC CONDITIONS

TABLE 1.6: ACADEMIC CHALLENGES OF STUDENT-ATHLETES

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Difficulty faced in keeping grades up as per ability	68 (57.6)	36 (30.5)	14 (11.9)
2	Difficulty faced with making up class assignments due to sport	72 (61.0)	32 (27.1)	14 (11.9)
3	Difficulty faced in keeping pace with the academic calendar	65 (55.1)	38 (32.2)	15 (12.7)
4	Difficulty faced with preparing for examinations	70 (59.3)	34 (28.8)	14 (11.9)
5	Difficulty faced in focusing on classes	62 (52.5)	40 (33.9)	16 (13.6)
6	Sports injuries affect academics	75 (63.6)	28 (23.7)	15 (12.7)
7	Difficulty faced in maintaining health	69 (58.5)	33 (28.0)	16 (13.6)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.6, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards academic challenges of student-athletes are as follows:

1. A majority (57.60 percent) of student-athletes reported that they faced difficulty in maintaining their grades according to their ability, while a smaller number (30.50 percent) of student-athletes stated that they experienced such difficulty to some extent. Only a few number (11.90 percent) student-athletes indicated that they never faced any difficulty in keeping their grades up. It can thus be interpreted that most student-athletes encounter challenges in maintaining academic performance in line with their potential.

2. A majority (61.00 percent) of student-athletes agreed that they found it difficult to make up class assignments due to sports, while (27.10 percent) student-athletes faced

such difficulty to some extent. Only few number (11.90 percent) student-athletes said they did not face this problem. This suggests that participation in sports often limits their time for completing academic assignments.

3. More than half (55.10 percent) student-athletes of respondents reported difficulty in keeping pace with the academic calendar, while (32.20 percent) student-athletes experienced it to some extent, and (12.70 percent) student-athletes did not face such difficulty. This reflects that balancing sports schedules with academic timelines remains a significant issue.

4. A considerable proportion (59.30 percent) of student-athletes reported difficulty in preparing for examinations, and (28.80 percent) student-athletes to some extent, whereas only (11.90 percent) student-athletes faced no difficulty. This indicates that academic exam preparation is often compromised due to sports-related commitments.

5. About (52.50 percent) of student-athletes found it difficult to focus on classes, while (33.90 percent) student-athletes experienced it to some extent, and (13.60 percent) did not face such problems. This implies that fatigue and time conflicts from sports impact concentration during academic sessions.

6. A majority (63.60 percent) student-athletes agreed that sports injuries affect their academics, (23.70 percent) student-athletes said to some extent, and (12.70 percent) did not agree. It can be inferred that physical injuries often hinder consistent academic performance.

7. Around (58.50 percent) of student-athletes had trouble in maintaining health, (28.00 percent) to some extent, and (13.60 percent) student-athletes did not. Thus, maintaining physical and mental health along with sports and academics is a common challenge.

TABLE 1.7: SOCIAL AND PEER INTERACTION ISSUES

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Feeling disconnected from classmates	61 (51.7)	39 (33.1)	18 (15.3)
2	Dual pressure due to academics and sports	78 (66.1)	30 (25.4)	10 (8.5)
3	Labeled as a non-serious student by teachers	64 (54.2)	33 (28.0)	21 (17.8)
4	Classmates with good academic records maintain distance	57 (48.3)	37 (31.4)	24 (20.3)
5	Toppers of the class feel uncomfortable befriending	60 (50.8)	36 (30.5)	22 (18.6)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.7, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards social and peer interaction issues of student-athletes are as follows:

1. More than half (51.70 percent) of student-athletes

reported feeling disconnected from classmates, while (33.10 percent) student-athletes felt so to some extent, and (15.30 percent) student-athletes did not feel disconnected. This highlights a tendency toward social isolation due to sports engagements.

2. A significant majority (66.10 percent) reported dual pressure from academics and sports, (25.40 percent) to some extent, and (8.50 percent) did not. This reflects the heavy dual responsibility student-athletes face.

3. More than half (54.20 percent) indicated being labeled as non-serious by teachers, (28.00 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (17.80 percent) student-athletes did not. It implies a bias in teachers' perceptions toward athletes.

4. Nearly half (48.30 percent) student-athletes agreed that academically strong classmates maintain distance from them, (31.40 percent) student-athletes student-athletes to some extent, and (20.30 percent) student-athletes student-athletes disagreed. This shows the existence of subtle peer segregation.

5. Nearly (50.80 percent) student-athletes agreed that toppers feel uncomfortable befriending them, (30.50 percent) student-athletes to some extent followed by (18.60 percent) student-athletes did not. Hence, social barriers persist within academic circles for athletes.

TABLE 1.8: PERCEPTION AND TREATMENT BY TEACHERS

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Usually afraid of failing semester exams	66 (55.9)	35 (29.70)	17 (14.40)
2	Considered a failure by teachers/professors	60 (50.8)	38 (32.20)	20 (16.90)
3	Professors appreciate being a sportsperson	70 (59.3)	30 (25.40)	18 (15.30)
4	Professors expect same quality of assignments	74 (62.7)	28 (23.70)	16 (13.60)
5	Same assignments as non-athlete students	77 (65.3)	27 (22.90)	14 (11.90)
6	Write the same tests as non-athlete students	73 (61.9)	29 (24.60)	16 (13.6)
7	Teachers give assignments that fit time after sports	54 (45.8)	40 (33.90)	24 (20.30)
8	Teachers concerned about work completion anyhow	68(57.6)	33 (28.00)	17 (14.40)
9	Teachers give easy assignments downloadable online	46 (39.0)	38 (32.20)	34 (28.80)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.8, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards perception and treatment of teachers are as follows:

1. A majority (55.90 percent) of student-athletes reported being afraid of failing semester exams, (29.70 percent) to some extent, and (14.40 percent) did not. This suggests considerable anxiety among them regarding academic evaluation.

2. About (50.80 percent) of student-athletes felt considered as failures by teachers, (32.20 percent) to some extent, and (16.90 percent) disagreed. It reveals a perception gap between teachers and athletes.

3. A majority (59.30 percent) student-athletes acknowledged that professors appreciate sports involvement, while (25.40 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (15.30 percent) student-athletes did not. This indicates a generally positive yet limited recognition of their sports achievements.

4. Nearly (62.70 percent) student-athletes reported that professors expect the same assignment quality as non-athletes, (23.70 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (13.60 percent) student-athletes did not. It reflects uniform academic expectations regardless of dual commitments.

5. About (65.30 percent) student-athletes confirmed receiving the same assignments as non-athletes, (22.90 percent) to some extent, and (11.90 percent) did not. This shows minimal academic flexibility for student-athletes.

6. Most (61.90 percent) student-athletes said they wrote the same tests as non-athletes, (24.60 percent) to some extent, and (13.60 percent) disagreed. Hence, exam systems remain uniform for all students.

7. Only (45.80 percent) student-athletes agreed that teachers give assignments suitable for their limited time, (33.90 percent) to some extent, and (20.30 percent) disagreed. This implies inadequate academic accommodation.

8. More than half (57.60 percent) student-athletes said teachers are mainly concerned about completion of work, (28.00 percent) to some extent, and (14.40 percent) disagreed. Thus, flexibility and understanding from faculty remain limited.

9. Only (39.00 percent) student-athletes agreed that teachers provide easy or downloadable assignments, (32.20 percent) to some extent, and (28.80 percent) disagreed. This reflects teachers' general preference for maintaining rigor over leniency.

TABLE 1.9: CONFLICT BETWEEN SPORTS AND ACADEMICS

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Sports practice suffers due to academics	71 (60.2)	31 (26.3)	16 (13.6)
2	Coach wants 100percent commitment to sports	84 (71.2)	23 (19.5)	11 (9.3)

3	Coach wants punctuality on ground	88 (74.6)	20 (16.9)	10 (8.5)
4	Difficult to convince players about academics	63 (53.4)	38 (32.2)	17 (14.4)
5	Want to give equal time to both	79 (66.9)	28 (23.7)	11 (9.3)
6	Sports performance suffers due to academics	67 (56.8)	35 (29.7)	16 (13.6)
7	Teachers and coaches blame poor performance	62 (52.5)	37 (31.4)	19 (16.1)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.9, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards conflict between sports and academics are as follows:

1. About (60.20 percent) student-athletes reported that sports practice suffers due to academic engagement, (26.30 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (13.60 percent) student-athletes disagreed. This shows that both activities compete for time.

2. A majority (71.20 percent) student-athletes said coaches expect 100 percent commitment to sports, (19.50 percent) to some extent, and (9.30 percent) disagreed. This highlights the intensity of sports expectations.

3. Almost three-fourths (74.60 percent) student-athletes reported coaches demand punctuality at all costs, (16.90 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (8.50 percent) student-athletes disagreed. This reinforces the strictness of athletic discipline.

4. More than half (53.40 percent) student-athletes found it difficult to convince teammates about prioritizing academics, (32.20 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (14.40 percent) student-athletes did not. It indicates peer pressure within teams.

5. A majority (66.90 percent) expressed desire to give equal time to both academics and sports, (23.70 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (9.30 percent) student-athletes did not. This shows their aspiration for balanced development.

6. About (56.80 percent) student-athletes felt that sports performance suffers due to academic pressure, (29.70 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (13.60 percent) student-athletes disagreed. Hence, academic stress adversely affects sports performance.

7. Slightly more than half (52.50 percent) student-athletes believed that both teachers and coaches blamed poor performance on them, (31.40 percent) to some extent, and (16.10 percent) disagreed. It reflects the burden of accountability faced by student-athletes.

TABLE 1.10: INSTITUTIONAL COORDINATION AND SUPPORT

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Lack of coordination between Sports Director & HOD	64 (54.2)	33 (28.0)	21 (17.8)

2	Different tests should be there for student-athletes	82 (69.5)	24 (20.3)	12 (10.2)
3	University should prepare special timetable	85 (72.0)	22 (18.6)	11 (9.3)
4	Orientation for teachers and coaches needed	88 (74.6)	20 (16.9)	10 (8.5)
5	Assignments should match learning levels	79 (66.9)	27 (22.9)	12 (10.2)
6	Remedial classes would help	86 (72.9)	21 (17.8)	11 (9.3)
7	Coaches should plan timetable keeping academics in view	83 (70.3)	23 (19.5)	12 (10.2)
8	University should allocate more funds for timetable	80 (67.8)	26 (22.0)	12 (10.2)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.10, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards institutional coordination and support are as follows:

1. Around (54.20 percent) agreed there is a lack of coordination between the Sports Director and Head of Department, (28.00 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (17.80 percent) student-athletes disagreed. This shows institutional misalignment.

2. A majority (69.50 percent) student-athletes supported separate tests for athletes, (20.30 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (10.20 percent) student-athletes did not. This highlights the need for tailored academic evaluations.

3. About (72.00 percent) student-athletes wanted a special timetable for student-athletes, (18.60 percent) to some extent, and (9.30 percent) disagreed. This indicates demand for scheduling flexibility.

4. Nearly three-fourths (74.60 percent) student-athletes suggested orientation programs for teachers and coaches, (16.90 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (8.50 percent) student-athletes disagreed. Thus, awareness programs are widely supported.

5. A majority (66.90 percent) student-athletes agreed that assignments should suit athletes' learning levels, (22.90 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (10.20 percent) student-athletes disagreed. This reflects the need for differentiated instruction.

6. About (72.90 percent) student-athletes supported remedial classes for athletes, (17.80 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (9.30 percent) student-athletes did not. It indicates the necessity of academic reinforcement.

7. Around (70.30 percent) student-athletes agreed coaches should plan time considering academics, (19.50 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (10.20 percent) student-athletes did not. These stresses coordinate planning between sports and academics.

8. Finally, (67.80 percent) student-athletes agreed that universities should allocate funds to support special timetables, (22.00 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (10.20 percent) student-athletes disagreed. It

implies financial support is essential for integration.

TABLE 1.11: ATTITUDINAL CHANGE AND CURRICULUM DESIGN

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	Teachers should stop considering student-athletes as failures	91 (77.1)	18 (15.3)	9 (7.6)
2	Curriculum redesign can help athletes excel academically	87 (73.7)	21 (17.8)	10 (8.5)
3	Better to join sports academy than academic course	44 (37.3)	36 (30.5)	38 (32.2)
4	Admission through sports quota builds career in both fields	80 (67.8)	26 (22.0)	12 (10.2)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.11, the findings and interpretation of each statement towards attitudinal change and curriculum design are as follows:

1. A majority (77.10 percent) of student-athletes agreed that teachers should stop considering student-athletes as failures, (15.30 percent) to some extent, and (7.60 percent) disagreed. This reveals a strong demand for change in teachers' perceptions.

2. About (73.70 percent) of student-athletes agreed that curriculum redesign can help athletes excel, (17.80 percent) to some extent, and (8.50 percent) disagreed. This implies that flexible curriculum models can improve outcomes.

3. Only (37.30) student-athletes percent felt it is better to join a sports academy than an academic course, (30.50 percent) to some extent, and (32.20 percent) disagreed. Hence, a balanced academic-sports approach is preferred.

4. A majority (67.80 percent) agreed that admission through sports quota builds careers in both domains, (22.00 percent) to some extent, and (10.20 percent) disagreed. This shows positive perception toward dual-career opportunities.

TABLE 1.12: CAREER PROSPECTS AND INSTITUTIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

S. No.	Statements	Yes (N/%)	To some extent (N / %)	No (N / %)
1	University offers basic facilities for athletes	74 (62.7)	30 (25.4)	14 (11.9)
2	University provides platform for higher tournaments	79 (66.9)	26 (22.0)	13 (11.0)
3	Concern about impact of athletics on career prospects	64 (54.2)	37 (31.4)	17 (14.4)
4	Athletics provides beneficial future skills	88 (74.6)	20 (16.9)	10 (8.5)
5	Scholarships/financial aid are important incentives	92 (78.0)	17 (14.4)	9 (7.6)
6	Scholarships should cover more than sports expenses	84 (71.2)	23 (19.5)	11 (9.3)

7	Institutions should provide career transition programs	77 (65.3)	28 (23.7)	13 (11.0)
8	Concern about transition to non-sports careers	69 (58.5)	32 (27.1)	17 (14.4)
9	Institutions promote gender equity and diversity	81 (68.6)	25 (21.2)	12 (10.2)
10	College-level sports open diverse career opportunities	85 (72.0)	22 (18.6)	11 (9.3)
11	Equal prospects for male and female athletes	78 (66.1)	28 (23.7)	12 (10.2)

Based on the data analyzed in Table 1.12, the findings and interpretation of each statement regarding career prospects and Institutional Opportunities are as follows:

1. Around (62.70 percent) student-athletes replied that their university provides basic athletic facilities, (25.40 percent) student-athletes to some extent, and (11.90 percent) of student-athletes disagreed. This suggests satisfactory infrastructure.

2. About (66.90 percent) of student-athletes agreed that the university provides platforms for higher tournaments, (22.00 percent) of student-athletes to some extent, followed by (11.00 percent) of student-athletes are disagreed. It reflects institutional encouragement for sports.

3. The (54.20 percent) of student-athletes expressed concern about the impact of athletics on their career prospects, (31.40 percent) to some extent, and (14.40 percent) did not. This shows mixed perceptions about sports-career balance.

4. A significant (74.60 percent) student-athletes believed that athletics provides beneficial skills for future careers, (16.90 percent) to some extent, followed by (8.50 percent) of student-athletes disagreed. Hence, sports are viewed as a contributor to life skills.

5. A majority (78.00 percent) student-athletes emphasized the importance of scholarships or financial aid, (14.40 percent) to some extent, and (7.60 percent) did not. This highlights financial incentives as a strong motivator.

6. Around (71.20 percent) of student-athletes felt scholarships should cover more than sports expenses, (19.50 percent) to some extent, and (9.30 percent) disagreed. This indicates expectations for holistic support.

7. About (65.30 percent) of student-athletes supported career transition programs, (23.70 percent) to some extent, and (11.00 percent) disagreed. This stresses the need for post-sports career planning.

8. Around (58.50 percent) of student-athletes expressed concern about transitioning to non-sports careers, (27.10 percent) to some extent, and (14.40 percent) disagreed. It suggests uncertainty about future career paths.

9. Nearly (68.60 percent) of student-athletes agreed that institutions promote gender equity, (21.20 percent) to some extent, and (10.20 percent) disagreed. This shows moderate gender sensitivity in programs.

10. A majority (72.00 percent) student-athletes admitted

that college-level sports open multiple career doors, (18.60 percent) to some extent, and (9.30 percent) of student-athletes disagreed. This emphasizes the value of sports for employability.

11. The (66.10 percent) student-athletes reported equal prospects for both genders, (23.70 percent) of student-athletes to some extent, and (10.20 percent) student-athletes disagreed. Thus, gender equity is acknowledged but can be further strengthened.

1.9 FINDINGS

- Male student-athletes dominate participation, indicating gender imbalance.
- Rural students form a significant proportion of the athlete population.
- Student-athletes display strong leadership qualities through captaincy roles.
- Academic challenges include difficulty maintaining grades, exam preparation, and concentration.
- Sports injuries and health issues significantly affect academic performance.
- Social isolation and labeling by teachers negatively impact student-athletes.
- Coaches demand high commitment, intensifying academic-sports conflict.
- Lack of coordination between academic departments and sports authorities persists.
- Strong demand exists for special timetables, remedial classes, and flexible assessments.
- Sports participation is perceived as beneficial for future career skills and employability

1.10 CONCLUSION

The study concludes that student-athletes at Jamia Millia Islamia face both opportunities and challenges in balancing academics and sports. While institutional platforms support leadership and career skill development, academic rigidity, health concerns, and weak institutional coordination hinder optimal performance. The findings emphasize the need for flexible curricula, teacher sensitization, coordinated academic-sports planning, and targeted support to strengthen dual-career

frameworks and promote holistic development of student-athletes.

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