Women Orthopaedic Surgeons of India have been excelling in their respective fields. The prestigious Marcela Uribe Zamudio Award given at the SICOT Congress has multiple Indian recipients. This award was started in 2003 by Dr Leonard Zamudio (SICOT President, 1990 - 1993). It is dedicated to young female researchers under 40 years, and supports their participation at the SICOT Congresses. Let’s meet India’s Super Seven winners!

1. Dr Binoti Vyas Sheth, Amsterdam 1996
   I was still a trainee in my final year of orthopaedic residency and had applied for the award as recommended by my teacher. Attending my first ever international conference as an award winner was a unique experience! Exposure to the excellent work of world-renowned orthopaedic surgeons motivated me to excel in my work, publish and flourish. It gave a good start to my orthopaedic career, leading to many more awards and recognitions in future. I feel blessed to receive this award!

2. Dr Sonali Babhulkar Pande, San Diego 2002
   Paper: Ultrasonography neonatal screening for early diagnosis of Developmental Dysplasia of the hip in India.
   The feeling of receiving this gender specific award was special and it lingers on. It was a recognition of my work at that time and true to its purpose of encouraging young female researchers and clinicians, it stimulated me to continue my interest in research and academics. This certainly laid the foundation for a large number of presentations and publications at national, regional and international levels and future scholarships.

3. Dr Rujuta Mehta, Hong Kong 2008
   Paper: Functional outcomes for pollicisation in camptodactylous and symphalangic fingers in cases of radial hemimelia
   Receiving the coveted award at the hands of SICOT President Chadwick Smith was validation of my career choice and a defining moment in my life. The international recognition and exposure widened my horizons. It boosted my CV which resulted in both the Japanese Paediatric Orthopaedic association travelling fellowship and the visiting scholarship to DKCH Hong Kong in subsequent years. The seeds for creating a similar award to encourage Indian women in ortho were sown in 2008. Although an uphill task back then, WOICE is a reality today. I will always look back with happy memories, gratefulness and pride that the next two recipients were my own fellows in years to come.
4. Dr Ratna Johari Maheshwari, Prague 2011
*Paper: Occult Spinal dysraphism in Congenital spinal deformities: Indian Perspective , A study of 248 cases of Congenital spinal deformities.*

I received the award at the hand of John Dormans in my second year of orthopedic residency. Receiving a recognition from an esteemed international orthopedic body like SICOT was a huge boost to my confidence. It also sparked my interest in research which resulted in publications and book chapters that I have contributed to in subsequent years. My involvement with SICOT increased thanks to this award, and I became the first Women’s Subcommittee Chair of the SICOT Young Surgeon’s Committee. I would say that this award paved the way for meaningful opportunities and outcomes for me, and I am forever grateful.

5. Dr Chasanal Rathod, Rio 2014
*Paper: Reconstruction of Hips in Severely Spastic Procedure of choice, and assessment of HRQL following reconstruction*

It was indeed a rewarding moment to be a female orthopaedic surgeon and receive this award for an original scientific work. I won this prestigious award during my clinical fellowship at Severance Children’s Hospital, Seoul, South Korea (2011-2012). With this experience, I felt like the “Sky is the limit” and was better prepared for the POSNA – POGO Scholar Award (Paediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America) and AACPDM (American Academy of Cerebral Palsy and Developmental medicine) Travelling Scholarships. The awards and scholarships by various associations not only encourage young surgeons to attend meetings across the world but also enable them to think more, prepare for more awards, learn the art of presentation and networking, gain more knowledge, and achieve more at different stages of their career.

6. Dr Samundeeswari Saseendar, Muscat 2019
*Paper: Surgical Stabilization of Rib Fractures: Emerging Indications*

Getting into orthopaedics was no simple decision and completing my masters was no simple task. I applied for the Marcela Uribe Zamudio award amidst all odds and resistances to showcase that orthopaedics is a subject of evidence-based medicine and anyone can win the race when equipped with the skill and will power. SICOT gave me a leap of hope that women can excel in this field and encouraged me further. I went on to complete my masters and continued my academic work. I have now authored in indexed journals and chapters in books for Springer Nature and ISAKOS.
Paper: Comparison of Ilizarov ring fixator and Rail fixator in Infected Non union of Long bones: A retrospective follow up study

One of our fellow colleagues got an award and another bagged the SICOT diploma in 2020. Out of curiosity, I searched what this award was for and who was giving it. I became a member of SICOT (which was hassle-free) as I wished to be part of this international society. It has paved my way to do more. I started working on my paper presentation at an international level and received the award during the Hybrid Congress at Budapest in Hungary in 2021. Getting a reward for the work done motivates to achieve more.

Summary by Rujuta Mehta: Chairperson, WOICE

‘Virtue is its own reward’ as aptly said by Socrates. However an award at an elevated organisation such as SICOT provides the foundation and platform for young talent to blossom, ingrain excellence and strive towards higher goals. We hope this story inspires more women from the Indian sub-continent and all over the world to push their limits and do the best they can to contribute richly in this orthopaedic field and achieve leadership positions.

The base of classical Indian music has seven notes out of which countless melodies are woven. Let’s hope these seven stories inspire symphonies in future!