

## OTHER FACTS ABOUT NOKIA

Geeta Charusivam adds :

Nokia has been one of the worst land grabs in Tamil Nadu in the name of development. It got 200 acres of prime agricultural land on the Chennai Bangalore Highway at Sriperumbudur from its benefactor viz., Tamil Nadu government which cut the price of land as a special deal. Furthermore, it allowed Nokia to sublet the land at a higher price. As the developer, Nokia got a 99-year lease from SIPCOT, Tamil Nadu's industrial investment agency that acquired the land some years ago, thus avoiding the sort of clashes with farmers that are now happening elsewhere when agricultural land is being gobbled up by industry. The other companies located in the SEZ include accessory and spares makers for Nokia products like Foxconn, Salcomp, Perlos, Jabil Circuit. All of these companies have a record of violating labour laws, environmental safeguards etc. Just about a month back, there was a bad gas leak in Foxconn, which affected more than 250 workers who severely vomited blood. That company too refused to stop production and forced the workers on the next shift to carry on work without informing them of the leak. However, it managed to black out the news from appearing in any media. Foxconn still does not have all the necessary clearances / licences to run the company, but is still carrying on merrily.

As if this was not enough, the Tamil Nadu government granted financial sops worth Rs 645.4 crore for Nokia Telecom Special Economic Zone by offering to reimburse the Value Added Tax (VAT). A number of anti-labour clauses were also offered by the TN government to Nokia. Frequent use of contract labour and low wages ranging from Rs 3,400 to Rs 5,400 has also been found. There are several issues that deserve serious attention.

Is a machine, however expensive, more important than a human life? If this is the attitude of the multinational management of Nokia and its Indian supervisor then can it still be termed as an 'accident' as newspapers like 'The Hindu', 'Times of India' and others have done? Or should one see this criminal negligence and callous attitude of Nokia as responsible for the 'murder' of a young woman worker Ambika.

The state government has to be responsible in ensuring that proper safeguards are in place before issuing licences, registrations and clearances to such companies.

The only union in Nokia SEZ as well several other SEZs is the Labour Progressive Front, the trade union wing of the ruling DMK government. This union is known to be a stooge of the management and forever sacrificing workers' rights. □□□

*[source : [www.sanhati.com](http://www.sanhati.com)]*