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A Mega-Thread on a 111-year-old conglomerate and one the most debated stocks of the Indian stock markets #ITC (Earlier known as Imperial Tobacco of India) @ITCCorpCom

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1) ITC first set foot in 1910 at Calcutta based on agricultural products and services.

2) A year later in 1911, it began sourcing leaf tobacco from South Indian Farmers to mass-produce consumer cigarettes, a landscape it would dominate for over a century!

3) In 1911, They set up a stall at the Delhi Darbar to promote Scissors, one of ITC's initial cigarette brands.

The constant need for promotions ultimately led to the relocation of the company from Calcutta to Delhi.

4) The first step of ITC’s Indianization was initiated in 1954 with 6% Indian shareholding. It steadily rose to 40% by 1971!

5) ITC was the first Indian company to prioritize consumer research, laying the ground for its legendary R&D center that is now half a century old.

6) It is rebranded today as ITC Life Sciences and Technology Centre and continues to play a pivotal role in developing its diverse product range across varied sectors.

7) The 1970s was the first time ITC diversified into the non-tobacco business. The company first ventured into hotels, then paperboards and packaging. These initially separate companies later became wholly owned divisions of ITC.

8) In 1975, ITC began changing the landscape of Indian Luxury Hotels by launching Hotel Chola.

9) This would later pave roads for them to become the third-largest hotel chain in India, with over 100+ hotels.

10) The company saw the opportunity to earn high levels of foreign exchange, tourism infrastructure and produce large-scale direct and indirect employment.

11) The 1990s was the golden period for ITC hotels. These properties were considered a perfect amalgamation of extravagance and sustainability.

12) ITC also invested rapidly in developing the ITC Gardenia, ITC Grand Central, ITC Sonar, and ITC Maratha.

13)Throughout the 90s, ITC's PR strategy was to stay low profile as its core business was into Tobacco, Cigarettes, and paper.

14) After recognizing the possibilities of heavy taxation on tobacco, ITC further ventured into other sectors like foods, textiles, and dairy.

15)In 2000, ITC’s impressive initiative ‘e-Choupal’ empowered and equipped the farmers of India with computers and internet connectivity to facilitate best farming practices, training sessions, weather information, and the supply of good quality seeds and fertilizers to farmers.

16)In 2000, the company launched ITC's Wills Sport range of casual wear.

17) They also established an information technology division, ITC Infotech Limited, and merged ITC Bhadrachalam Paperboards into ITC Limited.

18) Due to ITC's wide distribution channel, the company did not feel the need to create a separate distribution channel for its FMCG products. It sold FMCG products via its network of more than 3.5 lac outlets pan India.

19)ITC has over 15 lac tobacco retailers, surpassing Unilever's distribution chain of more than 10 lac retailers pan India.

20)ITC's Sunfeast ready-to-eat Pasta initially faced backlash due to rival brand Nestle's instant noodles Maggie.

21) Today, ITC's ready-to-eat food segment is at number 2, with MTR Foods leading the market. This is followed by Sunfeast biscuits at number 3, after Britannia and Parle with a 10% share in the market.

22) ITC's operating profit margin is around 35%, whereas Hindustan Unilever and Nestle India stand at 15% and 20%.

23) However, ITC Food is contributing more revenue than its hotels off late.

24) ITC's Ashirwad atta is the number 1 flour brand with a 40% market share.

25) In 2013, the district earned the rare distinction as the first smoke-free zone in the state to boost tobacco control.

26) ITC initially set up one of its largest tobacco production units in the Munger district of Bihar way back in 1910.

27)ITC’s core sectors today continue to be paperboards, tobacco, and agri-business.

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28) ITC hospitality business for a long time smoked a huge chunk of its cash flow which their most profitable segment (tobacco) was generating.

29) Once Y.C. Deveshwar got appointed as the new chairman in 1996, #ITC exited their edible oils and financial services business.

30) He handed over (Sundrop) edible oils business to ConAgra Foods Limited and ITC Classic Finance To ICICI Limited in 1998.

A company started by the British, then Indianized over decades, ITC has been launching 20+ new products every year for the past 3 years.