Sholas

The Sholas are a mosaic of mountane evergreen forests and grasslands. They are found only in high altitude (>1500 metres above sea level) regions within the tropics, and are limited to the southern part of the Western Ghats.

They are characterised by undulating grassland patches, interspersed with thickets of stunted evergreen tree species. Recent study has indicated that timber plantations, expanding agriculture and the spread of invasive species reduced two thirds of the shoals in palani hill ranges of Western Ghats. There is a marked 67% decline in grassland area compared to 1973 level.

The natural march of invasive species such as prolific-seed-producer, acacia and the policy push for plantations in 1990s seems to be the main cause for decline. Fragmented grasslands also displaced endemic species Nilgiri Pipit.