

Geology and petrographic study of the area from
Chiraundi Khola to Thulo Khola, Dhading/Nawakot
district, central Nepal

by

Gyanendra Gurung

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I certify that Mr. Gyanendra Gurung, student of Central Department of Geology, Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur has worked satisfactorily for his Master's Degree dissertation under my supervision. This dissertation entitled “**Geology and petrographic study of the area from Chiraundi Khola to Thulo Khola, Dhading/Nawakot district, central Nepal**” embodies the candidate’s own work and I hereby recommend the dissertation for approval.

Dr. Megh Raj Dhital
Reader
Central Department of Geology
Tribhuvan University
Kirtipur

The M. Sc. dissertation entitled “**Geology and petrographic study of the area from Chiraundi Khola to Thulo Khola, Dhading/Nawakot district, central Nepal**” has been submitted and successfully presented by Mr. Gyanendra Gurung to the Central Department of Geology, Tribhuvan University. This is to certify that his dissertation has been accepted as a partial fulfillment for the requirement of M.Sc. in Geology.

Dr. Prakash Chandra Adhikary

Head

Central Department of Geology
Tribhuvan University, Kirtipur

External Examiner

Supervisor

Dr. Megh Raj Dhital

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Table of contents

<i>List of acronyms</i>	v
<i>List of figures</i>	viii
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
<i>List of tables</i>	ix
CHAPTER I	1
INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 <i>Introduction</i>	1
1.2 <i>Location and Accessibility of the study area</i>	2
1.3 <i>Aim and objectives</i>	3
1.4 <i>Methodology</i>	3
1.5 <i>Organisation of dissertation</i>	3
CHAPTER II	7
GENERAL OVERVIEW OF THE HIMALAYA	7
2.1 <i>Introduction</i>	7
2.2 <i>Tectonostratigraphic division of Himalaya</i>	7
2.2.1 <i>Sub Himalayan zone</i>	7
2.2.2 <i>Lesser Himalaya</i>	8
2.2.3 <i>Main Central Thrust Zone</i>	9
2.2.4 <i>The Higher Himalaya</i>	9
2.2.5 <i>Tibetan Tethys Sedimentary Series</i>	10
2.3 <i>Previous works</i>	10
CHAPTER III	14
LITHOSTRATIGRAPHY	14
3.1 <i>Introduction</i>	14
3.2 <i>Lower Nawakot Group</i>	14
3.2.1 <i>Nourpul Formation</i>	15
3.2.2 <i>Dhading Dolomite</i>	16
3.3 <i>Upper Nawakot Group</i>	16
3.3.1 <i>Benighat Slates</i>	16
3.2.3 <i>Malekhu Limestone</i>	17
3.2.4 <i>Robang Formation</i>	17
3.4 <i>Bhimphedi Group</i>	18
3.4.1 <i>Raduwa Formation</i>	18
3.4.2 <i>Bhaisedobhhan Marble</i>	19
3.4.3 <i>Kalitar Formation</i>	19
3.4.4 <i>Chisapani Quartzite</i>	21
3.4.5 <i>Kulikhani Formation</i>	21
3.5 <i>Magmatic and Migmatitic rocks</i>	21
3.5.1 <i>Gneiss</i>	22
3.5.2 <i>Amphibolite</i>	24
CHAPTER IV	26
PETROGRAPHY	26
4.1 <i>Introduction</i>	26
4.2 <i>Lower Nawakot Group</i>	26
4.2.1 <i>Nourpul Formation</i>	26
4.2.2 <i>Dhading Dolomite</i>	26
4.3 <i>Upper Nawakot Group</i>	28
4.3.1 <i>Benighat Slates</i>	28
4.3.2 <i>Malekhu Limestone</i>	28
4.3.3 <i>Robang Formation</i>	29
4.3.3.1 <i>Phyllite</i>	29
4.3.3.1 <i>Quartzite</i>	30
4.4 <i>Bhimphedi Group</i>	30
4.4.1 <i>Raduwa Formation</i>	30
4.4.2 <i>Kalitar Formation</i>	31

4.4.2.1	<i>Garnet-biotite-muscovite schist</i>	31
4.3.1.2	<i>Chlorite-biotite-muscovite schist</i>	33
4.4.2.1	<i>Micaschist</i>	33
4.4.2.2	<i>Schistose Quartzite</i>	35
4.4.2.3	<i>Sillimanite Schist</i>	35
4.4.3	<i>Chisapani Quartzite</i>	35
4.4.4	<i>Kulikhani Formation</i>	37
4.4.4.1	<i>Micaschist</i>	37
4.4.4.2	<i>Schistose Quartzite</i>	37
4.4.4.3	<i>Kyanite Schist</i>	39
4.4.5	<i>Magmatic and Migmatitic rocks</i>	39
4.4.5.1	<i>Gneisses</i>	39
4.3.5.2	<i>Amphibolite</i>	41
CHAPTER V	.....	43
METAMORPHISM	.....	43
5.1	<i>Metamorphism in the study area</i>	43
5.2	<i>Mineral assemblage</i>	43
5.3	<i>Metamorphic grade</i>	44
5.4	<i>Metamorphic zonation</i>	45
5.5	<i>Metamorphic facies</i>	46
CHAPTER VI	.....	50
GEOLOGICAL STRUCTURES	.....	50
6.1	<i>Introduction</i>	50
6.2	<i>Main Central Thrust (MCT)</i>	50
6.3	<i>Minor Structures</i>	50
CHAPTER VII	.....	55
CONCLUSION	.....	55
CHAPTER VIII	.....	57
REFERENCES	.....	57
	<i>Annex I Geological Map and Cross-sections</i>	62
	<i>Annex II Route Maps along Kolphu Khola</i>	65

List of acronyms

HHC	Higher Himalayan Crystallines
HHZ	Higher Himalayan zone
IUGS	International Union of Geological Sciences
MBT	Main Boundary Thrust
MCT	Main Central Thrust
MFT	Main Frontal Thrust
MT	Mahabharat Thrust
NHNF	North Himalayan Normal Fault
PPL	Plane polarised light
P/T	Pressure/Temperature
SCMR	Subcommission on the Systematics of Metamorphic Rocks
STDS	South Tibetan Detachment system
XPL	Crossed polarised light

List of figures

Figure 1.1 Location map of study area.....	5
Figure 1.2 Drainage Map of the study area.	6
Figure 3.1 Photograph of garnetiferous schist of Raduwa Formation observed in Chiraundi Khola.	18
Figure 3.2 Highly foliated garnet-biotite schist alternating with mica schistose quartzite in a section along Kolphu Khola. This is a typical outcrop of Kalitar Formation.	20
Figure 3.3 Alternating of dark and white bands of schist and quartzite of Kalitar Formation observed at the bridge over Mahesh Khola in Galchhi.	20
Figure 3.4 Augen Gneiss observed at the confluence of Bhote Khola, and Kolphu Khola.	23
Figure 3.5 Hornblende gneiss observed in Chiraundi Khola.	23
Figure 3.6 Outcrop of amphibolite in Thulo Khola.	25
Figure 4.1 Photomicrograph of Specimen A/28 (Nourpul Formation) from Kalchedi. The quartz (qtz) grains are anhedral to subhedral. The brown streaks are biotite (bt).	27
Figure 4.2 Photomicrograph of Specimen A/24 (Dhading Dolomite) from Devighat Road section. Dolomite (dol) crystals show dull brown colour, whereas calcite (cal) are of lighter colour...27	27
Figure 4.3 Photomicrograph of Specimen B/58 (Robang Formation) from Kalleri.	29
Figure 4.4 Photomicrograph of Specimen B/73 (Raduwa Formation) from Chiraundi Khola.	31
Figure 4.5 Photomicrograph of garnet-biotite-muscovite schist of Specimen C/328 (Kalitar Formation) from Bhote Khola.	32
Figure 4.6 Photomicrograph of chlorite-biotite-muscovite schist of Specimen G/17 (Kalitar Formation) from Kolphu Khola.	32
Figure 4.7 Photomicrograph of Specimen G/100 (micaschist of Kalitar Formation) from Kolphu Khola.	34
Figure 4.8 Photomicrograph of Specimen B/75 (quartzite of Kalitar Formation) from Chiraundi Khola.	34
Figure 4.9 Photomicrograph of Specimen A/4 (sillimanite schist) from Baireni.	36
Figure 4.10 Photomicrograph of Specimen B/41 (Chisapani Quartzite) from Chiraundi Khola.....	36
Figure 4.11 Photomicrograph of Specimen C/146 (Kulikhani Formation) from Kusumdada.	38
Figure 4.12 Photomicrograph of Specimen C/136 (schistose quartzite of Kulikhani Formation) from Torikharka.	38
Figure 4.13 Photomicrograph of Specimen A/17 (kyanite schist) from the Mahesh Khola.	40
Figure 4.14 Photomicrograph of Specimen A/5 (augen gneiss) from Baireni.	40
Figure 4.15 Photomicrograph of Specimen G/58 (Hornblende gneiss) from Kolphu Khola.	42
Figure 4.16 Photomicrograph of Specimen C/337 (amphibolite) from Thulo Khola.	42
Figure 5.1 Metamorphic zonation map of the study area.....	47
Figure 5.2 Distribution of metamorphic minerals in the study area.	48
Figure 6.1 Migmatite in Mahesh Khola.	51
Figure 6.2 Crenulation cleavage in micaschist of Kalitar Formation.	52
Figure 6.3 Snowball garnet in Raduwa Formation.	52
Figure 6.4 Myrmekite structure in gneiss.	54
Figure 6.5 Small-scale fold in Bhote Khola.	54

List of tables

Table 3.1 Tectonostratigraphic subdivision of Galchhi	15
Table 5 Mineral assemblages of the rocks in the study area.....	44

Chapter I

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

The Himalaya are renowned as an excellent example of effects of continent–continent collision. The closure of the Tethys sea and the subsequent collision the Indian plate into a collage of plates made up Central Asia some 45~50 Ma (Le Fort, 1975). The orogenic related processes of deformation, crustal thickening, metamorphism, melting and foreland basin evolution still continues till today. Thus, the Himalaya is an ideal laboratory to study such geologic phenomena.

In the early years, geological research in the Himalaya had been limited, and the preliminary information that existed about the geology of Nepal, consisted of few notes. These largely dealt with the cursory visits of Hooker (1854), Medlicott (1875), Auden (1935), and Heim and Gansser (1939). After Nepal opened its border in 1950, a nine-year long reconnaissance geological survey of Toni Hagen covered virtually the whole country. Hagen's work will remain, despite the criticism, a pioneer thesis on the geology of Nepal Himalaya (Stöcklin, 1980). After that period of time, there have been a large number of studies by many researchers in various parts of Nepal, and they have all added to the pool of knowledge on Himalayan geology.

The occurrence of widespread thrusting within the Himalaya was largely based on the observations of Pilgrim and West (1928) and Auden (1937), and the orogen's inverted metamorphism, an increase in metamorphic intensity towards higher structural levels, appeared to have resolved by tectonic activity. Inverted metamorphism suggests the presence of wholly overturned strata or heat sources that counteract the influence of the asthenosphere (England and Molnar, 1993).

However, there is controversy and confusion over the definition, nature, and position of the Main Central Thrust (MCT) and its associated history and deformation throughout the Himalayan range. Le Fort (1975), and Pêcher and Le Fort (1986) regarded the higher grade of metamorphism shown by the package of rocks of the MCT Zone as the thermal effect associated with the thrusting of the hot Higher Himalayan Crystalline (HHC) slab over the cold Lesser Himalaya. Bird (1978) argued that mantle lithosphere delamination beneath the Himalaya was a plausible consequence of continental collision and proposed that heating and melting as a cause for thrusting within the Himalaya.

1.2 Location and Accessibility of the study area

The study area lies in central Nepal and comprises the southeastern region of the Dhading District, and southwestern portion of Nuwakot District. The study area extends from Chiraundi Khola in the southwest to Thulo Khola in the northeast (Fig. 1.1, and Fig. 1.2). It has a complex network of drainage system (Fig. 1.2). It falls within central Nepal, which is an excellent area to evaluate manifestations of the variations of the Himalaya. It has a major intracontinental thrust, known as the MCT. The MCT is located at the base of the Himalayan break, and it places lower-grade Lesser Himalayan metasedimentary rocks beneath the high-grade metamorphic rocks of the Kathmandu Complex.

The study area can be easily approached by the Prithvi Highway, which crosses the area from east to west. Besides this, the newly constructed Galchhi—Devighat road connects the area with the northern part. The network of foot trails throughout the area connecting different villages has made the area accessible on foot.

1.3 Aim and objectives

This study was conducted specifically to understand the stratigraphy and the existing metamorphism in the study area. The specific objectives are as follows;

- Preparation of route maps along the Kolphu Khola,
- Preparation of geological map of the study area,
- To study the petrography and structure of the area, and
- To understand the metamorphism of the area.

1.4 Methodology

Before embarking on field, literature was extensively reviewed. Rock specimens collected in the field were later studied in laboratory and thin sections were prepared for petrographic study using the laboratory facilities in the Central Department of Geology.

Detailed fieldwork was carried out by conducting geological traverses along rivers, trails, and road cuts. Specimens representative of existing lithology were at different locations. The boundaries between different formations were marked on a 1:25,000 scale topographic map during geological traverses.

1.5 Organisation of dissertation

The dissertation is organised into nine chapters. This chapter includes an outline of the study area, objectives, and methodology. Chapter 2 describes geology of the Himalaya, emphasizing a broad overview of the study area. This chapter reviews the existing literature on the Lesser Himalaya, and Higher Himalaya.

The lithostratigraphy of the study area is discussed in Chapter 3. The characteristics of uppermost rocks of the Nawakot Complex, and the lowermost formations of the Kathmandu Complex are described in this chapter. The petrographic study is presented in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 deals with the metamorphism of Galchhi. It discusses the metamorphic grade of the study area, and provides some insights on the metamorphic buildup of Galchhi. The geological structures that were identified in field are described in Chapter 6. Finally, Chapter 7 summarizes the whole dissertation.

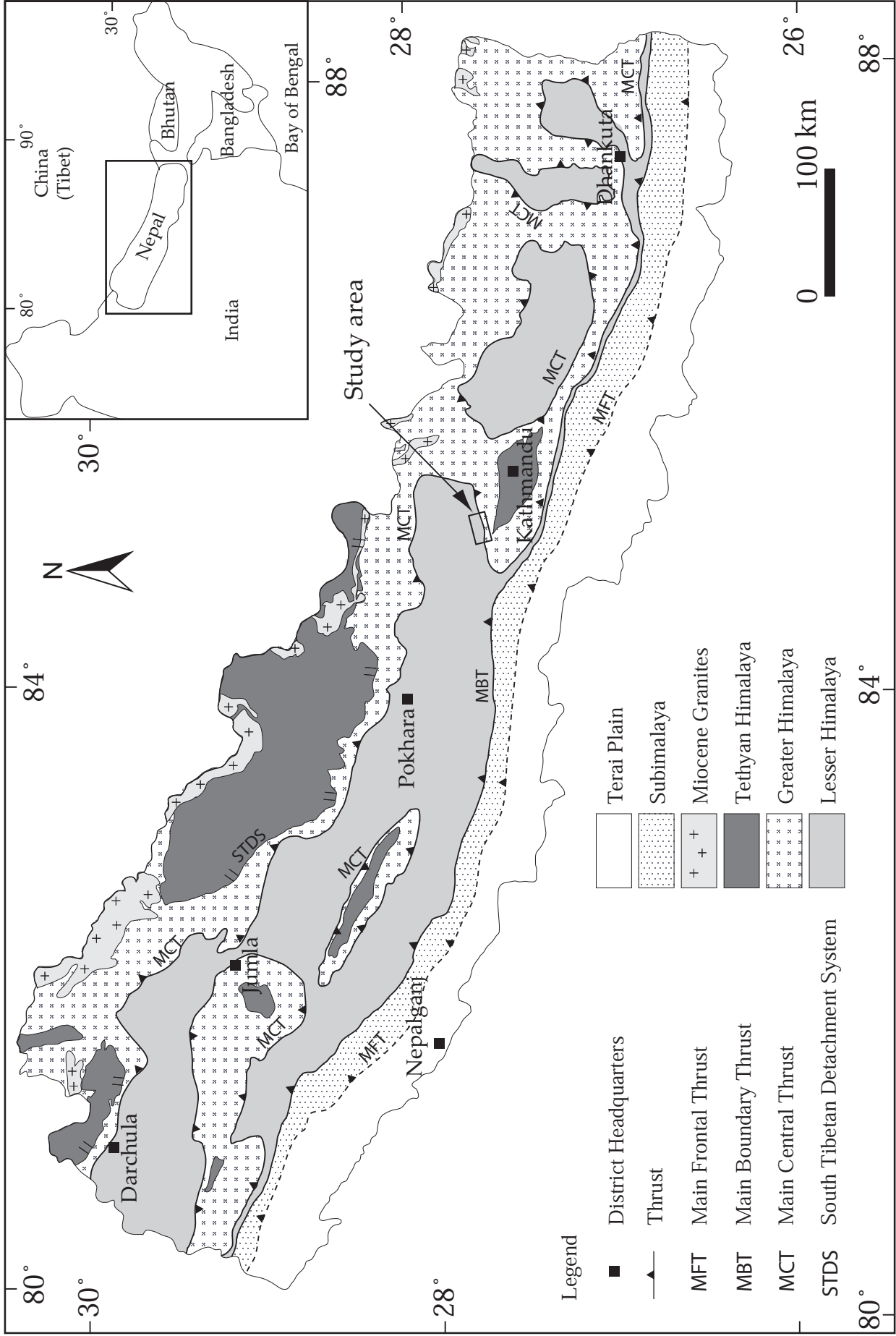


Figure 1.1 Location Map of the study area. (Source: Pearson et al, 2002)

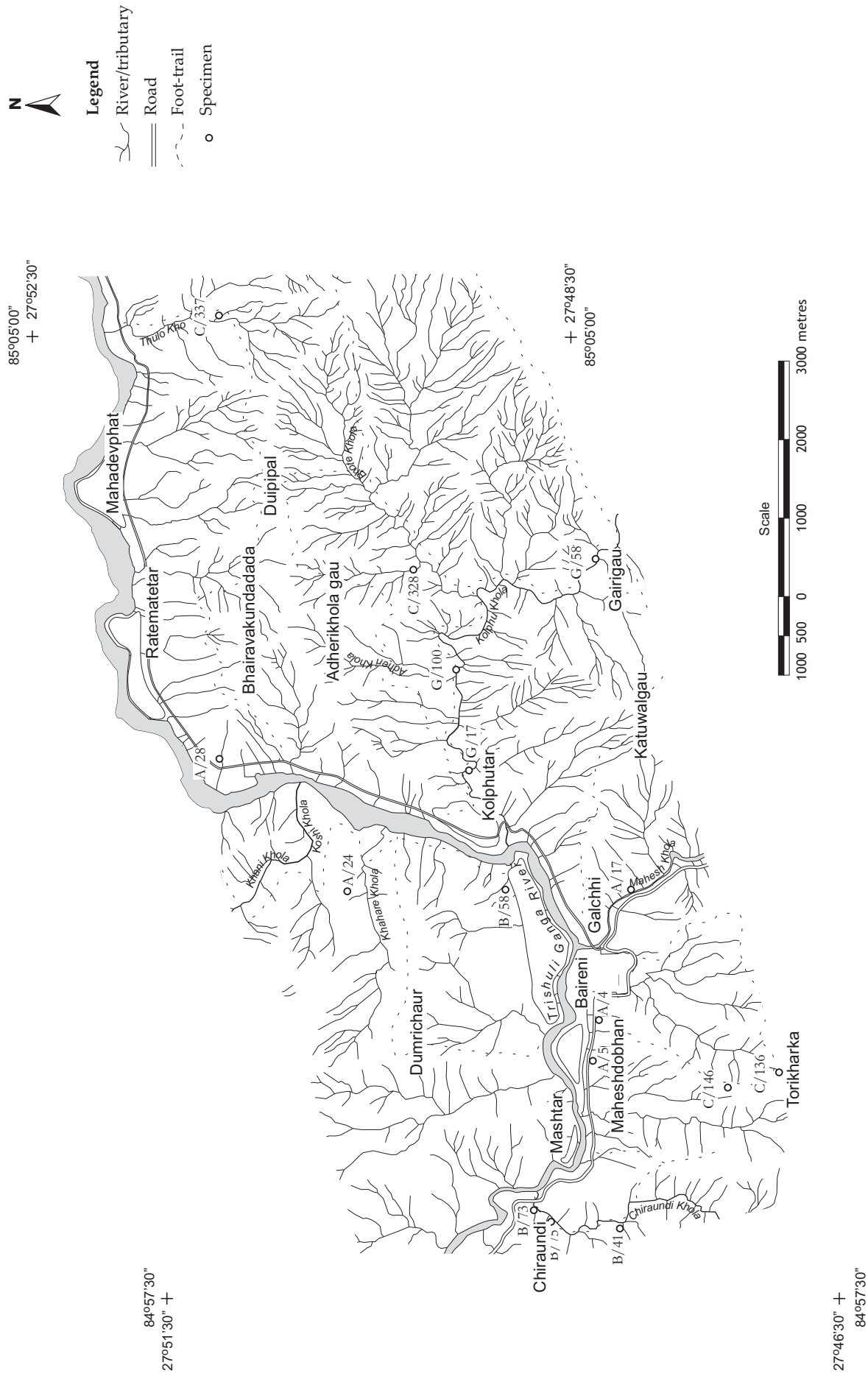


Fig. 1.2 Drainage map of the study area