cues delivered by the marketing mix. The framework attempts to estimate the gap between the two for each of the firms and notionally evaluate the appropriateness of marketing strategies. It may be further suggested that the appropriateness of marketing strategy would be reflected positively in the market position of the firm in terms of market share, sales growth etc. (Roland *et al.*, 2004).

## 3. Methodology

The framework discussed above was described and explained empirically by using a number of small business firms of similar nature. Our approach was comparative in nature. The steps adopted in our study were as follows:

(1) identification of the firms under study;

(2) study of background of the firms;

(3) study of marketing mix of the firms and their target segments;

(4) customer survey to measure perception of the firms' market offerings;

(5) interpretation of appropriateness of marketing strategies of individual firm;

(6) impact of appropriateness on market performance for individual firm.

In step 1, we looked for a homogenous market in the city of Kolkata, which was dominated by small firms and important in terms of growth and opportunity. The steps 2 and 3 were mostly case studies and were qualitative in nature, covered by observations, personal interviews and examination of internal reports. In the step 4, we were concerned about the customer perception with respect to the market offerings. For this purpose, a customer survey was conducted. A questionnaire was designed for the purpose of extracting information on the following:

(1) customer characteristics of respondents;

(2) general characteristics of the market;

(3) ratings of a number of selected parameters to evaluate customer's perception on a five-point scale.

Also, level of importance for such individual parameter was collected on a five point scale. In step 5, we carried out exercises to identify the market segments, if any, by using some simple parameters. Then, for each of the segments, customer perception profile was constructed for all the firms, by way of a two dimensional positioning map, one indicating the perceived overall quality and the other the perceived value for money, indicated by the respondents in the questionnaire. The overall quality factors in our case were derived through factor analysis technique. The positioning maps were then examined in a qualitative way to judge the appropriateness of the marketing strategies of firms. The appropriateness of the marketing strategy was thus interpreted. In step 6, we studied the market share and sales growth of the firms, through internal reports, outlet surveys and interviewing the management of the firms. Finally, the market position in terms of market share and sales growth was interpreted in the light of appropriateness of marketing strategies of individual firm.

The bakery sector in India was reserved by the government for small businesses. One of the measures of the policy support for promoting small businesses in India was the policy of reservation[1]. The policy environment for Indian industry in the 1990s underwent an array of changes from broad-based domestic economic reforms launched