Women in the royal households of princely India presented a rather enigmatic problem for the colonial British administration. Wives, mothers, sisters, daughters and concubines enjoyed a direct access to the ruler beyond the surveillance of resident British officials. Such access could be translated into securing official appointments, ouster of rivals, or gain ‘lucrative boons’. As the British officials prodded their partners in empire to remove young princely heirs from the zenana, their antipathy for female regents as ‘unfit mothers’ shaped a specific approach towards women’s rights to succession, inheritance and property rights. The administrative moves to separate the funds of the Maharanis from their minor sons, the enormous bureaucratic procedures generated by this separation, the prolonged processes of deciding suitable guardians point at the strenuous efforts to establish the policy of depriving ‘native’ royal women of any control over the heir apparent – that an ‘unfit’ mother must be estranged from her son. This paper argues that the narratives of estranged sons and their ‘unfit’ mothers of Cooch Behar princely state goes back into late eighteenth century, and this history of tussle over the control of the heir to throne – the guardianship of the minor king as per official parlance – is deeply entrenched in the socio-economic history of early colonial Northeast India. This paper focuses on certain chronological events from 1780s to 1930s to explore the creation of the image of ‘unfit’ mothers of minor kings in Cooch Behar and the relationship of this image with the functioning of the indirect rule in the princely state.